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BUDGET CUTS PUT VITAL CARE SERVICES AT RISK

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POWER STATION: 'No blackout threat' and 'No threat to local building jobs'. See page 4'

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Picture: KEITH SLATER

GILLS SO CLOSE TO CUP SHOCK

More than 4.5 million football fans tuned in to watch Gillingham's nail-biting third-round FA Cup game against Aston Villa on Sunday.

Despite two divisions and 50 league places separating the sides, the Gills came agonisingly close to causing a huge cup upset - losing 2-1 after a controversial penalty was awarded to the Premiership outfit.

Gills manager Mark Stimson said his players had been a credit to themselves and the fans, saying: "I thought they went out there against a very strong Aston Villa side and gave a good account of themselves. "I'm frustrated with the result because I thought we were that close to getting a draw and going back to Villa Park."

It is thought the televised game earned the League Two team more than £300,000, money which could help the side in their push for promotion in the second half of the season.

FOR IN-DEPTH COVERAGE OF THE CLASH SEE OUR SPORTS SECTION ON PAGES 38 AND 39.

■ BY SIMON ROBINSON

COUNCIL chiefs have hit out at Government moneymen after £5 million was cut from its funding package.

The six figure sum was shaved off Medway's 2009/2010 allowance as part of the Government's 'floor damping' process, set up to ensure every council receives a minimum level of cash.

Senior council chiefs have slammed the "inconsistent" redistribution system - saying the authority is now facing a £14.3m budget shortfall and may have to make sweeping cuts to vital services.

It is thought children's services could be the worst hit, however cutbacks have previously been made in areas such as leisure, crèche and mental health services.

Medway Council's deputy leader Alan Jarrett said: "The Government likes to give with one hand and take with the other, and this year they are taking nearly £5m from us.

"This bureaucratic and nonsensical floor damping mechanism is taking the funds the council requires to serve the people of Medway and giving it to others, which means some councils are getting more than they need.

"This is unfair and is robbing the residents of Medway of the services they deserve."

Adult care services chief Tom Mason dubbed the Government's formula grant system as "wrong" and "unfair", saying authorities with lower tax levels were being punished.

He said: "Our tax rates are one of the lowest in the country and consequently our formula settlement is very low.

"Brighton and Hove authority, with demographics very much the same as Medway,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

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2 Can you help trace the history of Folkestone through the years? See www.yourkenttv.co.uk and search the leisure channel.



3 Catch a glimpse of one of the infrequently spotted waxwing bird. See web TV site www.yourkenttv.co.uk and search 'waxwing'.

SEE OUR SISTER PAPERS KENT ON SUNDAY AND THE SATURDAY EDITION FOR ALL THE WEEKEND'S COUNTY NEWS AND SPORT

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Pat's dedication rewarded with New Year MBE

■ BY SIMON ROBINSON

COMMUNITY service supervisor Pat Stewart has been awarded an MBE for her work with the Kent Probation Service.

She was named in the Queen's New Year's Honours List in recognition for her work in helping offenders turn their lives around.

The Medway community payback supervisor said she was thrilled.

"I am delighted to receive this award as I believe it reflects the tremendous work carried out by Kent Probation," she said.

"It is a real honour to help people get through their orders and to help them stop reoffending."

Ms Stewart was put forward for the honour on the back of her 15 years' service working in partnership with the One-to-One Club in Chatham, a day centre for adults with learning disabilities.

The probation worker supervises offenders at the club, assigning them roles such as reading to the adults, organising entertainment, providing one-to-one care and maintaining the gardens.

Each year, offenders provide more than 3,000 hours of work at the One-to-One Club, giving much-needed weekend respite for full-time carers.

One offender sentenced to 300 hours' community service has been providing one-to-one assistance to a visually-impaired man.

She praised Ms Stewart's dedication: "Pat puts so much effort into the club to keep it going by raising funds."



HONOURED: Pat Stewart MBE

It is inspirational that she is so selfless."

Kent Probation's chief officer Sarah Billiald also congratulated Ms Stewart: "This is fantastic for Pat, Kent Probation and probation services across the country," she said.

"Pat's work is a perfect package, providing clear benefits to the people of Chatham while at the same time rehabilitating offenders."

"Congratulations to Pat and all those who worked on this project."

Ms Stewart's work often goes far beyond her supervisory role, spending her spare time raising funds for the club and organising outings.

Both the club and offenders have benefited from her dedication and determination.

Her work has been praised by magistrates and a waiting list for places has built up largely to the reputation she has built for the club.

Fire chief's CBE

KENT'S Chief Fire Officer Charlie Hendry received the CBE for services to local government.

Mr Hendry, 48, said: "It's a tremendous honour to be recognised in this way."

"I believe that this recognition is a reflection of the hard work and commitment of everyone who works for KFRS. For me, it's a privilege to lead the best service in the UK."



DELIGHT: Charlie Hendry

yourmedway

NEWS IN BRIEF

Six schools closed by wintry conditions

YOUNGSTERS at six schools across Medway were given a late Christmas present when snow forced their schools to close.

Pupils at Greenacre, Walderslade Girls, Silverbank Park and Bradfields schools, all in Chatham, were told to stay at home on Monday morning, while Elaine Avenue Primary was closed because of heating problems.

Wintry conditions forced a total of 11 schools across Kent to close on Monday. Medway's schools reopened yesterday (Tuesday).

An early start for free swimming initiative

FREE swimming has been introduced early across Medway's leisure centres after additional NHS funding.

The scheme, open to those under 16 and over 60, was due to start in April, but extra funds saw the initiative rolled out on Friday.

Free swimming is available at the Black Lion leisure centre and Strand leisure pool, both in Gillingham; Strood sports centre; Splashes leisure centre, Rainham; and the Hundred of Hoo swimming pool.

Very special constable

THE Kent Special Constable of the Year trophy has been awarded to Lloyd Davis for his work in Medway and helping those in need abroad.

He was recognised for his work with the Chinese community and particularly for his tireless efforts after last year's devastating earthquake in China.

Mr Davis was able to obtain 50,000 mosquito nets which were shipped to the earthquake zone to help survivors and the relief effort.

Credit crunch helpline

A REDUNDANCY helpline has been set up for workers facing losing their jobs as a result of the credit crunch.

Citizens Advice Medway gives help on issues ranging from employment rights to job searching.

Chief executive Peter Stokes said: "We need to support people in making sure they are best equipped to face the difficult times ahead and help them keep their homes."

The helpline number is 01634 888182, available 9am to 4.30pm on weekdays.

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Trust apology three years after tragedy

■ BY SIMON ROBINSON

A TEENAGE girl who died three years ago could have been saved had she been treated sooner, it has been revealed.

Jenna Lester, 16, died from a brain haemorrhage at Medway Maritime Hospital a week after collapsing in the bathroom of her family home in Rochester.

Her death could have been prevented if she had been given a brain scan as soon as she was admitted to the Gillingham hospital, but doctors diagnosed her as suffering from a stomach infection.

Her family have spent nearly three years pursuing Medway NHS Foundation Trust through the health service complaints procedures.

Last week, trust bosses admitted the Fort Pitt Grammar School pupil might still be alive had doctors acted sooner.

After Jenna's collapse, her parents Mark, 42, and Sonia, 40, told medical staff their daughter had been suffering from splitting headaches for two months.

But as the teenager was not considered a 'patient of high priority', she was not sent for a brain scan.

It was only when her condition deteriorated considerably that Jenna was finally given the test – five days after she first collapsed.

She was transferred to King's College Hospital, London, for an operation to remove a blood clot on her brain.

Doctors initially thought the surgery had been successful, but her brain swelled dramatically and she died on February 17, 2006.



BITTER PILL: Jenna Lester was taken to Medway Maritime Hospital after collapsing at home in February 2006

Nearly three years on, the trust has finally admitted it "failed to properly assess and investigate" the teenager's condition.

Her parents received £10,000, but Mr Lester, a plumber, who lives with his wife, and teenage son and daughter, said no amount of money could compensate for such a devastating loss.

Speaking to a national newspaper, he said: "When we first took Jenna into hospital, we kept telling everybody that she had hit her head when she fell in our bathroom.

"We made sure the casualty office knew about

her two-month history of headaches. But no one examined her head, gave her an x-ray or a scan until it was too late.

"Doctors were convinced she was suffering from a gastric virus."

Medway NHS Trust has expressed its sincere apologies to the Lesters for the shortcomings in care.

A spokesman added: "While nothing can compensate for this tragic experience, lessons have been learned and robust arrangements are in place to ensure this does not happen again."

Any questions for David Cameron?

TORY leader David Cameron will visit Medway next week as part of a series of face-to-face question and answer sessions.

The leader of the opposition's Cameron Direct tour – in Chatham on Monday – will be his first such event in Kent.

Chatham and Aylesford Conservative prospective parliamentary candidate Tracey Crouch said: "I am delighted David is coming to Chatham for the first Cameron Direct event in the county.

"It is a fantastic opportunity for anyone of any political persuasion to come along and raise their issues, questions and concerns with him.

"The public set the agenda, so whether the issue is the global economic downturn or local antisocial behaviour, it will be answered by Mr Cameron in person."

The event is at the Church of Christ the King in Dove Close, from 6.30pm to 7.30pm.

The session is free and open to all local residents, but tickets must be obtained in advance.

To apply, call 01634 853322 or e-mail camerondirect@traceycrouch.co.uk.

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STREET LIFE: Revisit December's Dickens Festival. Search 'Dickens'

Care services at risk from budget cuts

FROM FRONT PAGE
receive £25m more by way of formula grant.

"They charge their band D resident £150 more per annum – giving them £13m more than Medway Council – which means they have £38m more to spend on service provision for their residents.

"How can that be fair? It seems because we are prudent, efficient and give value for money we are penalised."

For the 2009/2010 financial year Medway council has been allocated a formula grant of £82.23m.

This figure rises to £85.13m in 2010/2011.

Prison's Hawaii party 'waste of public cash'

TEENAGE tearaways being treated to a Hawaii-themed party at a Rochester prison has been attacked as a waste of taxpayers' money.

Inmates at the Medway Secure Training Centre – which houses some of Britain's most hardened young criminals – enjoyed a week-end of tropical fun, playing bongo drums and limbo dancing, and even being given access to an alcohol-free beach bar.

During the two-day party, convicted criminals were also allowed to play games, including Scalextric, in a youth club and each wing of the jail took part in a competition to come up with the best Hawaiian decorations.

Group Four Securicor, which runs the centre, has not revealed the full cost of the party.

Susie Squire of the Taxpayers' Alliance branded the weekend event "a waste of money" given the economic downturn.

She said: "Every penny of public money is now incredibly precious.

"We are all tightening our belts in the recession and the public sector should be doing the same.

"While we must encourage young offenders to improve themselves and keep busy and active, there is no



LIFE'S A BEACH: Medway Secure Training Centre inmates held a tropical party

need for this sort of frivolity."

The party came to light after being featured in LockDown, the prison magazine.

Defending the event, a Group Four Securicor official said: "We are required to provide regular activities for the young people at weekends, and these are usually led by youth workers.

"These activities are focused around teambuilding, improving social skills, diversity, cultural awareness and education, and help to build self-esteem among the young people in our care."

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Still counting cost of bridge traffic boom

A DEBATE on the future of the Dartford Crossing failed to convince Transport Minister Paul Clark that its controversial tolls should be removed.

When the Queen Elizabeth II Bridge was built in 1991, the government of the day promised motorists they would no longer be charged once construction costs had been met. However, tolls remained once the debt was cleared in 2003 and last month road-users were hit with increased charges at certain times of day.

Responding to a question by Tory MP James Brokenshire during a Commons debate, Gillingham and Rainham MP Mr Clark said the promises of yesteryear could not be fulfilled today.

He said: "Would it have been possible in the 1980s to predict the volume of traffic we have today? Some 53 million people make that crossing each year.

"All the profiling we did showed that if tolls were removed there would be a traffic increase of 17 per cent.

"If a vehicle breaks down, the delays and congestion it causes are substantial.

"If there were no tolls and no plaza, the pollution caused by vehicles would be even greater than it is now."

The toll is now £1.50 between 6am and 10pm, with free crossings outside those hours.

People living in Dartford and Thurrock receive 50 free crossings a year after paying a £10 annual administration fee, with additional journeys costing 20p.

Fruitful decision gives our farmers a boost

KENT farmers have been boosted by a Government decision to increase the number of foreign workers allowed to pick crops in the UK.

The Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme (Saws), which is being phased out in 2011, permits EU students to reside in Britain and return home once the season closes.

In 2006 the number was reduced from 25,000 to 16,250. The fruit industry suffered from a shortage of workers and crops went unpicked as a result.

Immigration Minister Phil Woolas has now announced a rise of 5,000 to make a total of 21,500 permitted pickers.

Faversham and Mid Kent MP Hugh Robertson said: "I am delighted. This will safeguard the fruit industry. Labour is the key component of a fruit farmer's cost base."

Mr Robertson said he was also assured by Mr Woolas that a similar or greater increase was likely in 2010.

National blackout worries are unfounded, says E.ON

ENERGY giant E.ON says there will be no national blackout when old-style coal-fired power stations – such as Kingsnorth – are forced to close.

Stations across the country will shut earlier than expected because they are working flat out to meet demand.

Kingsnorth is due to be decommissioned by the end of 2015 – but that will happen sooner if it continues providing power at its current high rate, says E.ON.

Kingsnorth and eight other stations were given 20,000 operating hours from January 2008 after their owners opted not to upgrade them to comply with tougher pollution standards.

But because the plants are still running at high rates to compensate for others that have yet to be built or upgraded, experts fear an energy gap that could lead to blackouts.

Chris Bowden, the chief executive of energy consultants Utilyx, told the Sunday Times newspaper that rising demand and the price of coal relative to record high prices of electricity were the causes of the problem.

He said: "When companies made the decision to opt out, it was a very different world. The idea was they would be peaking plants, but now they are running as base-load providers. The technology of some power stations would make them like classic cars, but now they are ready for the scrapheap."

But an E.ON official said people were "putting two and two together and getting 142". She added: "We have been running Kingsnorth high and if we continue, then yes, the hours will run out. In reality we won't continue to run it as high. No one knows the exact date it will close."



SLOW BURN: Kingsnorth power station is running at a high capacity

"We are running it so high is because a lot of the new nuclear stations are having problems and the coal-fired ones that opted into the EU directive are still having equipment fitted.

"They can't operate while work is still being done, so Kingsnorth has been picking up the slack. It's too early to predict when it will close. It depends what the market is doing at any given time."

E.ON has submitted controversial plans for a new coal-fired station at the site, with the Government due to make a decision early this year.

Power station builder counters discrimination claims

THE firm building the new gas-fired power station in Medway has denied discriminating against local workers.

French multinational Alstom has been criticised by the union Unite for not including a clause in its tendering contract that any subcontractor should seek to employ UK tradesmen.

The union fears the Polish firm Remak awarded the construction contract will bring in cheaper workers from abroad. Up to 200

jobs are expected to be created for the building of the main boiler at the site on the Hoo Peninsula.

Alstom are co-ordinating the work on behalf of the German energy giant E.ON. Unite regional officer Neil Willoughby said: "UK customers are paying bills to a German energy giant, which contracts a French multinational to build new power stations, which employs a Polish subcontractor who, we fear, will bring workers from abroad. Who is benefiting?

Certainly not UK consumers or workers."

Mr Willoughby said Unite was calling for a meeting with Remak to discuss the situation.

But Alstom described the claims as "false and inaccurate".

A spokesman said: "We never direct subcontractors to discriminate between UK or non-UK nationals.

"It would be morally wrong and illegal to do so. We always give British workers and firms an

equal chance to bid for work.

"Our priority is to build and deliver a safe, effective power station by engaging companies and personnel with the appropriate skills."

The spokesman also said its tendering contract was agreed and signed by the trade unions. An E.ON official said: "When it comes to the construction, it's Alstom's decision. We would encourage them to employ locally, but it's down to them."



SAY HELLO, HELLO, HELLO TO NEW NEIGHBOURHOOD TRIO

Lordswood has a new neighbourhood policing team comprising a constable and two community support officers.

PC Dave Saunders, PCSO James Bateman and PCSO Margaret Rose will be patrolling the area and holding surgeries and Partners And Communities Together meetings. The

team can be contacted on 01634 792347 or by email at lordswood@kent.pnn.police.uk.

Any residents concerned about policing issues in their community should contact their local neighbourhood officer. To find out who that is, visit www.kent.police.uk and enter your postcode.



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THE WAY WE WERE: Scenes of old Sheppey in Roger Godden's new DVD include (from left) Queenborough High Street; draymen ready for deliveries in Blue Town in 1935; and Sheerness streets during the floods of 1897

■ BY NICK AMES

A SECOND look at the past and present of the Isle of Sheppey is now available on a DVD which contains images dating back to the 19th century.

People, shops, trams, military history and maritime heritage are all documented by local historian Roger Godden, whose family have lived on the island for generations.

The Isle of Sheppey Past and Present is the second volume of photographic and filmed memories of the colourful history of the area.

Mr Godden said: "I've always been interested in the island and its history and I started taking photographs in the 1960s and '70s."

"They form part of the collection, but there are others which have been taken by local photographers or members of my family."

One picture actually features Mr Godden's grandmother.

"She is in a school photograph from the 1890s," he said. "It was taken at the school she attended in Blue Town. Then there are pictures of the floods of 1897."

"The island has an extremely interesting and varied history, especially when it comes to the military."

"Its strategic location has always made it important as it guards the mouth of the Thames Estuary."

"I was bought up between Army and Navy bases in the isle. Then there are the links with flying and the RAF."

"It even goes back to the Dutch invasion which was commemorated a few years ago when two ships visited. There are pictures of that visit on the DVD."

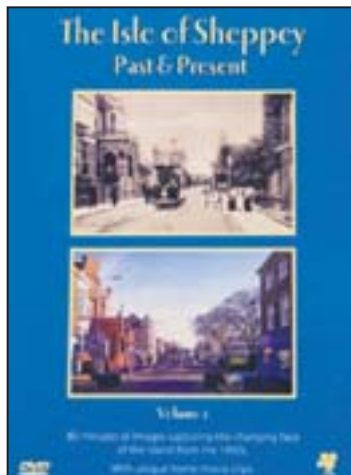
Mr Godden has always lived on the island and says it retains much of its charm.

"In Sheerness High Street you can see above the shops that many of the buildings are still the original Victorian and Edwardian structures," he said.

"The shop fronts as well. We are fortunate that enough has been kept to preserve the flavour of the past."

"From the 1930s to the 1960s Sheppey was a favoured tourist destination among Londoners. Warners holiday camp was just one of many attractions."

"I would like to see the area back on the tourist map, with heritage one of the major



COVER STORY: Volume two of Roger Godden's Isle of Sheppey Past and Present DVD is available now

attractions. We already have a heritage centre, then there is the Gatehouse Museum and the events planned for Eastchurch to celebrate the aviation centenary next summer.

"I hope my DVD can give people an insight into the rich history of the island so they can appreciate a visit – or the place they live – even more."

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Roger Godden talks about his Sheppey DVD. Search 'Godden'

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MAKING WAVES: Two vehicles pass on a waterlogged Sheppey road in the aftermath of the 1953 floods

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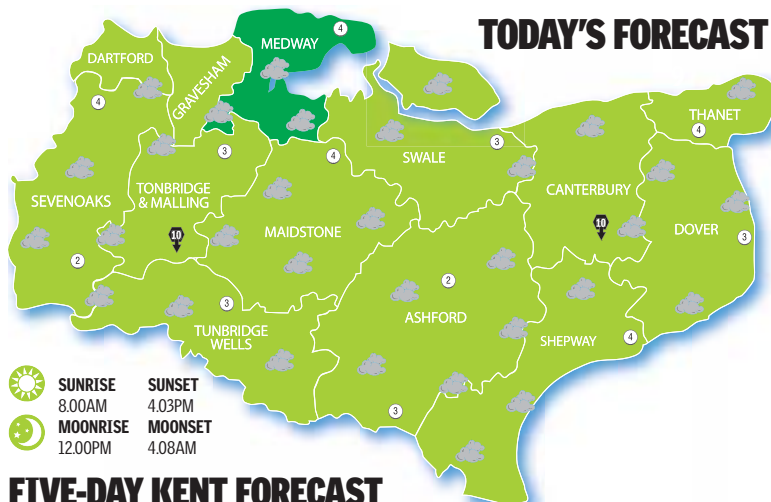
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Chatham	Saturday	11.34am	5.8m
	Sunday	12.30am	6.1m
Dover	Saturday	10.04am	6.4m
	Sunday	10.58am	6.6m
Dungeness	Saturday	9.52am	7.3m
	Sunday	10.47am	7.6m
Ramsgate	Saturday	10.31am	4.8m
	Sunday	11.26am	5.0m
Sheerness	Saturday	11.31am	5.6m
	Sunday	12.27am	5.8m
Whitstable	Saturday	11.37am	5.2m
	Sunday	12.38am	5.4m



AROUND THE WORLD YESTERDAY

Amsterdam	-1°C	Madrid	3°C
Athens	13°C	New York	2°C
Barcelona	9°C	Paris	-1°C
Beijing	-1°C	Rome	8°C
Bombay	29°C	Sydney	30°C
Cape Town	27°C	Tenerife	20°C
Cardiff	3°C	Tokyo	10°C
Gibraltar	14°C	Vancouver	3°C
Hong Kong	21°C	Warsaw	-11°C
Las Palmas	18°C	Wellington	19°C

FIVE-DAY KENT FORECAST

	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon		Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon
Ashford	2°C	4°C	4°C	3°C	4°C	Gravesend	2°C	4°C	4°C	4°C	4°C
Canterbury	1°C	4°C	3°C	3°C	2°C	Maidstone	2°C	3°C	4°C	4°C	4°C
Chatham	2°C	4°C	4°C	4°C	4°C	Ramsgate	1°C	4°C	3°C	3°C	2°C
Dartford	2°C	4°C	4°C	4°C	4°C	Rochester	2°C	4°C	4°C	4°C	4°C
Dover	2°C	3°C	3°C	3°C	3°C	Sevenoaks	1°C	2°C	3°C	2°C	3°C
Faversham	2°C	4°C	4°C	4°C	4°C	Sittingbourne	2°C	4°C	4°C	4°C	4°C
Folkestone	2°C	3°C	3°C	3°C	3°C	Tonbridge	2°C	3°C	5°C	3°C	4°C
Gillingham	2°C	4°C	4°C	4°C	4°C	Tun Wells	2°C	3°C	5°C	3°C	4°C

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Gig night a shambles for sick star Doherty

BABYSHAMBLES star Pete Doherty failed to pick up his family Christmas presents when he didn't make a show at the Tap n Tin pub in Chatham. The ex-Libertines front man had been due to support cockney duo Chas and Dave but left hundreds of fans who had paid the £30 ticket price disappointed.



WHAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN: Pete at a previous gig at the Tap n Tin pub

The venue said that he had set off for the concert but was forced to turn around and go home because of ill health.

He also failed to pick up his family's gifts as his sister, brother-in-law and uncle had all taken presents for him to the show.

Tap n Tin owner John Terry said: "Pete was very disappointed to not be able to perform but he had been ill all week."

"It was doubly disappointing for Pete because members of his family had all come along. It was their chance to meet up with him before Christmas and give him his presents. But he never got those either."

The show took place on Saturday with another act filling in as support and Chas and Dave playing a full set.

Mr Terry said: "When I made the announcement that he wasn't playing there was naturally a bit of disappointment in the crowd but the evening picked up and went well."

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QUESTION & ANSWER

LISA WELLS



Q Can you tell us about your role as fund-raising support assistant?

A My main duties as FSA are to provide support to two fund-raising managers and ensure the office runs smoothly.

Often I am the first point of contact, so I meet a diverse range of people. On a typical day I'll speak to volunteers such as committee members or our schools speaker, Macmillan staff and other supporters who may be doing anything from sponsored slims to running marathons to raise money.

I am also responsible for thanking donors and banking donations, writing press releases for our website, providing admin support during local and national events and solving practical problems in our office.

Every year, Macmillan holds collections at Tesco and Morrisons stores across Kent. I helped co-ordinate the Tesco collections in October which raised more than £16,000. Recently I have been working to deliver the same success at our Morrisons collections.

It is a varied role with lots of opportunities to meet supporters and attend events. It is challenging and demanding – no two days are the same – but also very rewarding.

Q Is working for a charity something you planned to do?

A After university, I found it extremely difficult to find a job without having real business experience.

It wasn't until a friend offered me some work experience at a charity called the Riverwood

Project that I decided I'd really like to pursue a career within the charity sector.

I approached Macmillan as a volunteer but was lucky enough to be offered a full-time position at the Kent office.

Q Tell us about Macmillan Cancer Support

A Macmillan provides practical, medical, emotional and financial support to people affected by cancer. We have set ourselves the ambition of reaching and improving the lives of everyone living with cancer by 2010.

At a local level we have more than 100 Kent-based Macmillan nurses, doctors and other health professionals such as our dietitian and speech and language therapist, who have the expert knowledge to help make living with cancer easier.

In 2007, Macmillan gave more than £210,000 in small grants to about 600 Kent cancer patients. These grants can help cover the cost of transport to hospital, a warm duvet, or even a much-needed family holiday.

Q What is it like to work for such a worthwhile cause?

A It's a charity that is close to my heart and I'm sure this is the case for many people. I am always greeted very positively because people are so interested in the charity and want to support such a good cause.

Q Can you give us some examples of fund-raising events or activities that you have helped to organise?

A When I started with Macmillan in May 2008, I was involved with a sponsored walk at Penshurst Place, just four days prior to starting.

I helped as much as possible, putting together packs for the Army cadets and helping with admin for the day. It was great to see the team in action and to introduce myself to our supporters and volunteers.

I am very involved with our Medway group, which raises funds solely for the Macmillan Cancer Care Unit at Medway Maritime Hospital in Gillingham.

We organised a fund-raising day in October which made £500. I support the group by raising awareness of events, providing fund-raising materials and sourcing raffle prizes. Our Christmas fair included a perfume tombola from John Lewis. We raised more than £1,000, which was fantastic.

In September I hosted my own coffee morning as part of Macmillan's World's Biggest Coffee Morning. I organised games, raffles, food and drink. We raised £559.

Q What is the highest amount ever raised from an event?

A The highest amount I have received was £10,832 from the Rochester and Cobham Park Golf Club.

The captains at the club chose Macmillan as their charity of the year and worked tirelessly to produce this fantastic amount. The money was collected through fund-raising days, raffles, a hog roast and a silent auction.

Fund-raising support assistant Lisa Wells speaks to Nick Ames about the amazing work done by Macmillan nurses and why they need our help in easing the burden of people living with cancer

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One of the country's most entrancing wonderlands – the marshes of The Swale. Search 'Dare'



Kieran Renihan, from Deal, reveals how to make natural chocolate. Search 'chocolate'



County MP **Damian Green** talks about what a new president means for America. Search 'Damian'



Hurting down the Cresta Run, Chatham, to the music of Queens Of The Stone Age. Search 'Cresta'

EDITOR'S CHOICE

You can view all these videos and others from around the county with the click of a mouse at...

yourkenttv.co.uk

Water shortage fears for the Kent desert

BY NICK AMES

KENT falls into a part of the UK which has less water per head of population than that available to the inhabitants of largely desert countries Morocco and Egypt.

The county is one of the areas of "serious water stress" identified in an Environment Agency report on the state of the nation's supplies which states that in the event of a hot dry summer rationing and hosepipe bans would inevitably come into force.

The survey warns that many lakes, estuaries and rivers are drained so quickly to provide fresh water for Britain's growing population there is a danger to wildlife and public supplies during dry years.

The Environment Agency says people are still wasting too much water in their homes, while water companies are allowing supplies to escape from leaking pipes.

It calls for the speedier introduction of water meters such as those introduced in Folkestone and on Romney Marsh – and for more reservoirs and desalination plants to be considered only as a last resort.

Trevor Bishop, the head of water resources, said: "We are trying to change the way we manage water resources and put in place the right incentives for people to use less water."

"There are three main ways – metering of customers, tackling leakage and more water efficiency in the home."

According to the agency, homes with meters use 13 per cent less water than those paying fixed water rates.

Mr Bishop added: "We are calling for meters, but done in the right way."

The report says the pressure is greatest in the South East and warns that the risk of water shortages, hosepipe bans and other restrictions will increase in the next few decades.



LOW: Water levels have dropped at Bewl, meaning supplies have to be supplemented from other sources

"Over the next 30 years, there will be increasing pressures from the rising population and associated development," it states.

"Looking further ahead, the impact of climate change could have a major impact on the water available for all uses."

Computer forecasts of climate change suggest wetter winters will be wetter on average in Britain but summers will be drier, particularly in the South East.

Compared to the rest of Europe, water resources are under greater stress only in drier countries such as Cyprus, Malta, Spain and Italy, the report added.

In recent years hosepipe bans have been introduced in the summer across much of the county and supplies – including those drawn from Bewl Water – have had to be supplemented by river water from the Medway.



MEATY: Chris Rook (centre) presents Florence Neves and her son Michael with their festive hamper.

A prize turkey

ONE lucky KOS Media reader had a tasty Christmas to remember after winning a food-lovers' competition in our newspapers.

Butcher JC Rook and Sons, which has shops across the county, offered a luxury hamper worth more than £1,000 to make sure the winner enjoyed the festive period in style.

More than 2,500 readers entered competition, but it was Florence Neves and her son Michael from Sittingbourne who took home the turkey.

Other tasty treats included Kent-reared beef, pork and lamb, a goose, smoked salmon, cheeses, cakes, biscuits and of course wines, whiskey, brandy and port.

Drop in stab deaths

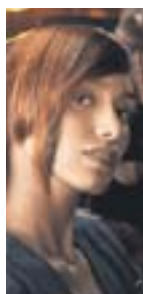
FIVE people were stabbed to death on the streets of Kent and Medway last year, new figures have revealed.

The Conservatives found that the number of fatal stabbings in England and Wales during 2007-08 had reached a record high with five people a week nationally losing their lives to knife crime.

Figures for Kent Police showed five people had been killed due to knife violence in 2007-08, down from six in 2006-07.

James Brokenshire, the shadow home affairs minister, called for the offence of knife possession to carry an automatic jail sentence.

"The Government's only response is short term, ad-hoc police operations, the results of which they spin and manipulate anyway to try and get a good story, 2009 must herald a new approach."



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At risk, our hedgehogs, voles and dormice

■ BY NICK AMES

A THIRD of mammals in the UK – including many species regularly encountered in the Kent countryside – are in “serious decline”, a disturbing report has revealed.

Dormice, water voles and harvest mice are among the creatures under threat, the State of Britain's Mammals survey warns.

And even the hedgehog – once a common visitor to many gardens – is under threat because of fewer hibernation sites.

The industrialisation of the countryside, the rise of invasive predators and modern farming techniques are to blame for falls in the numbers of about 40 species.

The report reveals that the number of water voles – a species immortalised by Ratty in *The Wind in the Willows* – has fallen by 88 per cent in the last 25 years.

They have been devastated by American mink that have escaped from fur farms.

Vazel dormice populations have fallen by 23 per cent the report, written for the People's Trust for Endangered Species, found.

The list of animals most at risk now includes 18 species – or 30 per cent of all land mammals in the UK.

Chief executive Jill Nelson said although hedgehogs remain a relatively common sight in gardens across the UK, their numbers have



RESTLESS SLEEP: Dormice numbers have declined by almost a quarter in recent years, according to the survey

fallen by a fifth since the early 1970s.

The fashion for neat gardens has robbed them of hibernation hideaways, while they have also been hit by loss of habitat, disease and changing climate.

Mrs Nelson said: “With population numbers of between one and three million there are

plenty of hedgehogs around, but fewer than there once was. They seem to be more prevalent in urban areas now because of changes in agricultural practices.

“When we hear people saying they are not seeing them in their gardens as much as they used to, you start to worry.”

Free legal help for victims of violence in their home

KENT Police are working with the National Centre for Domestic Violence to provide victims with access to legal representation 24 hours a day, all year round.

The partnership was launched at Kent Police College with Chief Superintendent Lee Catling, centre chief executive officer Steve Connor and local solicitors present.

The National Centre for Domestic Violence gives free legal advice and representation to victims of domestic abuse and helps them obtain court non-molestation orders, also known as injunctions.

An injunction stops a violent or abusive partner or ex-partner from using or threatening violence.

Chief Supt Catling said: “This partnership will help police officers in protecting victims and their families from abusers.

“Police and public protection unit officers will be able to refer victims to the centre for advice, which will help them start to rebuild their lives free from violence and abuse. Officers will be able to help victims seek free legal advice quickly.

“It is a criminal offence to breach non-molestation orders and we will arrest anyone breaching court orders.”

Mr Connor said: “Domestic violence is a cowardly crime. Our partnership with Kent Police will give anyone needing legal advice or an injunction fast access to our service, which is free to all regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation or financial circumstances.

“By standing together, we will send out a message that this horrific crime will not be tolerated and that we will work to bring abusers to justice.”

The centre is able to offer assistance at court using a ‘MacKenzie friend’ – a person who can offer legal advice – to accompany victims throughout proceedings. Leaflets publicising the partnership and the new services available in Kent and Medway are on display around the county.

‘Missing’ registered sex offenders revealed by FOI request

THIRTEEN registered sex offenders have “gone missing” in Kent, according to figures obtained by the BBC.

The broadcaster requested information about offenders who are not now at their reg-

istered address under the Freedom of Information Act. Data supplied by 38 police forces across the UK showed 317 sex offenders were reported as missing or unaccounted for.

The largest number of missing offenders was

reported by the Met in London, where 112 have disappeared. Other forces with high numbers missing include the West Midlands with 34, Greater Manchester (18), Northumbria (12) and Sussex (10).

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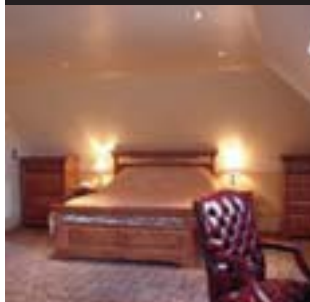
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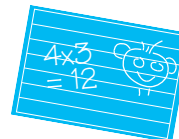
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**BREAK TIME****Disagreement over exclusion figures**

THE OPINIONS of a senior Conservative politician from Kent have clashed with those of his counterpart in the shadow cabinet over expelling children from school.

More than 7,800 pupils were excluded from state schools in Kent and Medway last year for a variety of offences.

Kent suspended more children, 6,040, than anywhere else in the country apart from Hampshire. In Medway, there were 881 exclusions. This included 706 incidents of physical assault against a pupil and 157 against an adult, 137 of verbal abuse or threatening behaviour towards other pupils and 747 towards an adult and 32 cases of sexual misconduct.

Michael Gove, the shadow children's secretary, said: "Headteachers need discretion to choose the appropriate sanction... but these figures show teachers have to rely on suspensions because there are too many obstacles to permanent exclusion."

The Conservative Party, which released the figures on Monday, said children were being suspended for offences which should result in expulsion.

Cllr Leyland Ridings, Kent County Council's cabinet member for children, said schools had been working better together to help children with behavioural problems and that was why the number permanently excluded had dropped.

Primary caught alight

FIREFIGHTERS tackled a blaze at a primary school.

Two fire crews from Maidstone and one from Headcorn were called to Bell Wood Primary School, Brishing Lane, at 5.49pm on Saturday, December 27, where an outbuilding had caught alight.

Police were called to the scene after the fire fighters needed a key to enter the premises, which was said to be "well alight" by the time the crews arrived.

The fire had been put out by 6.12pm.

Designs pay off in university dream

■ BY ANNA WHITE

MAIDSTONE can now add university town to its title after the University for the Creative Arts was awarded full status.

UCA, which has campuses in Maidstone, Canterbury, Chatham, Rochester and Epsom, has received complete university status and is now the first specialist creative arts university in the country.

The former university college was originally the Kent Institute of Art and Design, before uniting with the Surrey Institute of Art and Design.

The news has been welcomed by councillors as this is the first time Maidstone has had a university within the borough.

To celebrate the achievement the Mayor of Maidstone, Cllr Denise Joy hosted a reception for UCA on December 15, at the Town Hall.

Representatives of Maidstone council, including leader Cllr Chris Garland, members of Kent County Council and industry specialists all attended the event.

The Oakwood Park, Maidstone, campus has worked closely alongside Maidstone council in the past on various projects in the town.

On December 1, a digital mural to mark the history of the Paddock Wood to Strood railway line, created by UCA final year multimedia students, who were commissioned by Medway Valley Community Rail Partnership, was unveiled at Maidstone West train station.



PROMOTION: Formally Kent Institute of Art and Design, UCA has now been awarded full university status

The county town is also supporting UCA students showcasing their work by offering free use of property in the High Street.

Cllr Garland said: "Maidstone is proud to become a university town and welcomes UCA's active role within the community making the town a distinctive and vibrant place to live and work."

"Projects such as a digital mural, AniMaidstone, and Media Tree, all illustrate UCA's significant role in the borough."

"I hope going forward there will be many more opportunities for the council, Maidstone

Studios, Media Tree and UCA to work together and I once again congratulate them on achieving university status."

UCA has announced its intention to close its Oakwood campus and to build a £75 million new campus somewhere in Kent and Medway for 3,000 students, and the mayor hopes Maidstone will be involved in the changes.

She said: "We believe Maidstone offers the university and its students an excellent location to live, work and study and we will be clearly doing all we can to ensure UCA decides to invest in the town."

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Resolution escalates into a cross training experience

I'VE never really been one for making New Year's resolutions.

I always felt there was nothing to be gained from choosing this particular month for making life-changing decisions. Surely it is best to make these kinds of promises to yourself when you really feel like it?

Having said that, I have succumbed to the common mantra of keeping fit this year; I have even bought an exercise machine. I got the Carl Lewis Cross Trainer second-hand; perhaps in the knowledge it was not worth forking out huge amounts of money on something that was likely to end up in the back of a cupboard or 'accidentally' left at a roadside lay-by.

I bought the instrument of torture from a nice man in Sittingbourne. Well, he was certainly smiling when he saw me coming. It was probably just a sense of relief that he did not have to look at the damn thing for another year, nagging away at his conscience. He proudly said he had only ever used it twice. At least now he has 50 quid in his pocket and

could get some exercise walking to the pub.

I have used the machine more than twice. Three times in fact – and that's three times more than I imagine Carl Lewis ever did. The first time, I stumbled off the pedals as it sent my arms and legs flailing in different directions, ripping my hamstring in the process. The second time I stopped after three minutes because my heart rate was going so fast the pulse detector couldn't keep up. It can deal with anything up to 160 beats per minute but once you go past 300 it just becomes a blur.

I am beginning to believe only three Carl Lewis Cross Trainers were ever made. One for the picture in the catalogues, one demonstrated on TV shopping channels and the third was actually bought by a man in Chelmsford back in 1996 and has since made its way, through numerous owners, to end up in my spare room getting in the way of the filing cabinet.

My other resolution is not to go to the video shop unless I know what I want to watch. On one recent trip I spent nearly an hour in the shop deliberating over some worthy art film,

only to discover it was being shown on BBC2 that night. And it was rubbish.

Talking of films, I must stop watching Star Wars. In the last 12 months my habit has reached junkie levels. I blame the invention of the DVD box set. Sunday afternoons are the worst. I get this terrible craving and I have to get my fix – even if just for five minutes. Then I watch it again when the films are shown on ITV because the picture is slightly bigger and my failing eyesight can see more of the feeble CGI of the dreadful prequels. Before Christmas I actually asked my partner to get me the Clone Wars cartoon; the one done in a drawing style which gives all the characters the physique of Masi Warriors – even Jabba the Hut.

So this year it's less couch surfing in a galaxy far far away and more working out on a do-it-yourself escalator that doesn't go anywhere.

• **EDITOR'S NOTE:** All blogs are supplied with full name and address of the authors. They do not reflect the view of the newspaper but are designed to give our readers the chance to air their views.

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LET US KNOW...

If there is a story in your area you think we should be covering contact the news editor, **Jon Coates**, on 01303 817048 or email him on the details above. If you want to be the next Medway blogger then all you have to do is submit an article to us (of around 550 words) and email it to the news editor. And don't forget, for all the latest news and video from your town log-on to www.yourmedway.co.uk.

Write to The Editor, Yourmedway, KoS Media, Apple Barn, Hythe Road, Smeeth, Ashford, Kent TN25 6SR.

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The French government has announced today as the first day of the winter sales in the areas closest to the UK – le Nord, Pas de Calais and Aube.

French shopkeepers are strictly regulated when it comes to what they can call a sale. Just two are permitted a year, one winter and one summer, and reductions must be on normal stock. Buying stock in bulk and slapping a sale sign on it is a big non, non in France.

Discounts are generally between 50 and 70 per cent and 'Solde' is the key sign to look out for as it confirms items are in one of the formal sale periods. 'Degriffé' or 'Remise' followed by an amount shows the mark-down or discount.

Whilst 'Promo' or 'Promotion' signs are widespread they refer to just that: the sort of special offer promo a retailer can run at any time.

We've teamed up with P&O Ferries to give three lucky families a chance to bag some bargains by winning daytrip tickets for a car and passengers on the Dover-Calais route.

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The crossing takes 90 minutes and on arrival, the 4 Boulevards shopping complex in the heart of Calais includes a hypermarket, large H&M and gallery of 50 shops. Nearby are the shopping malls and hypermarkets of Citie Europe and Marques Avenue.



P&O Ferries has up to 25 return sailings every day on its Dover-Calais service, so there's always a sailing to suit.

For further information or to book visit www.POferries.com or call 08716 646464.

To enter, simply answer the question below and send your entry on a postcard along with your e-mail address (if applicable), name, address, and daytime telephone number to P&O Ferries Competition, KOS Media, Apple Barn, Smeeth, Ashford, Kent, TN25 6SR.

The closing date is January 14, 2009.

Question: What do the French call the sales? A) Les Ferdinand B) Les Dennis C) Les Soldes

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TALK TIME

TINA BEAN

The manager of a club which specialises in helping families with twins talks about double responsibilities



How was the club established?

The Twins Club was set up because some of the families said that although they appreciated the practical help a volunteer could provide, what they would really like and would be helpful would be to talk to other families in the same situation.

I took over the running of the two groups in February this year.

How does it operate in Swale?

In our area there seems to be a high number of multiple births and the parents feel the group gives them the time to relax while their children are able to play safely. They are also able to talk freely about any concerns they have and receive information from Home-Start, knowing we provide a confidential service.

Parents also find they make good friends within the group and often meet up at other times.

What are the particular issues?

Twins are hard work and apart from the extra feeding, changing, sleeping problems etc that are caused, there are many practical problems to overcome.

An example is going out: It can take longer to prepare to go anywhere, double buggies do not fit around some places and even baby changing facilities can cause a problem. Most of them are not designed to fit a double buggy in.

And what has been your most important finding?

Having twins can also be very costly. You have to buy double of everything.

YOUR LETTERS

Zambia pictures were wonderful

We are so lucky in the Medway Towns to have such a wonderful Cathedral in Rochester. I have attended various services in the Cathedral and visit quite frequently and always find something new and inspirational.

The procession and carols for the New Year was a beautiful occasion, but for me, the highlight of the year was the exhibition of photographs taken by Zambian school children.

I worked in Uganda in the 70s and the photographs brought back so many happy memories. It is amazing how little things appear to have changed.

The photographs showed abject poverty yet what was so uplifting were the smiles on the faces of the people in the photographs.

Well done to Hands of Compassion, Gad's Hill School and the cathedral for putting on such an amazing display.

It was only a pity it was not advertised and promoted more openly. I do hope the photographs are exhibited again. They deserve to be shown to a much wider audience.

Rosemary Moss (Mrs)
By email

We can be proud of our Olympic heroes

In many ways 2008 has been a year people will want to forget, with the continuing economic woes and the problems in the middle east and across the continent of Asia.

However there is one area which gave people (in the United



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Kingdom at least) a real boost - sport.

Not the overpaid prima donnas of the Premiership or the under achieving cricketers and rugby players but the members of the Olympic team who did so well in Beijing.

People such as Rebecca

Addington went out as virtual unknowns but by the end of the games were being acclaimed as heroes.

These performers shooed what sport is all about and brought a great deal of pride to the UK.

Warren Bright
By email

Goodbye to a national institution

What a shame to see so all those branches of Woolworths now closed forever.

This national institution will not be the last to go when it comes to high street stores and I forecast things will be a lot worse before they get better in 2009.

Let's hope the Government adopts a few policies which tackle the long term implications of the credit crunch and doesn't just opt for a quick-fix approach which will see further problems pile up in the future.

Philip Turner
By email

Closure sale really emptied the store

I went to the final sale in Woolworths and was stunned to see the store selling off its shelves. What good could they be to anyone unless they were setting up a store?

I've heard of everything must go sales but that was ridiculous.

Brian Hills
By email

Journeys will end up taking longer

I will be interested to see what impact, if any, the new high speed trains have when they come into service across Kent later this year.

It seems to me that only a few stations will benefit. Ashford will by far get the greatest reduction in travel time and I can see that trains running from the coast will improve travel times, even though they will not run at full throttle for the entire journey.

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But what about the smaller stations and villages?

I am sure there will be fewer services stopping at such places as Marden, Pluckley, Lenham and Charing on the London bound lines. So will villagers have to take a train to a major station and then board a fast one? This will add to journey times, not make them shorter.

Terence Roberts
By email

Lovely robin was a sight to behold

You recently carried an article about the RSPB and its call to put out winter nesting boxes.

I did in my garden and was delighted that a large variety of birds took advantage of the box.

The sight of a robin at Christmas time was a particular delight.

Diane McIntyre
By email

We need a Dr Who has some charisma

I must say how much I enjoyed the recent Christmas Dr Who show – but it certainly showed David Morrissey should not be considered for the title role.

In the part he played – a sort of Dr Who wannabee – he was very good. But when he was on screen next to David Tennant it was clear who the star was.

He did not have a fraction of the true Doctor's charisma and even though I'm sure the script was written that way, he did

not show nearly enough to warrant the permanent role.

Whoever is chosen as the next Timelord will have a great deal of work to do to even come close to Tennant's fine portrayal.

Tony Simpkins
By email

On the road to using ludicrous names

The recent move to suggest roads should be named after local people who have achieved something is a good one and would be a way to commemorate those who have put something into communities or left their hometowns and prospered elsewhere. But it should not be politically motivated.

The 80s saw a succession of ludicrous left wing councils naming otherwise normal streets after obscure Latin American "freedom fighters" or subsequently disgraced African politicians. It became a standing joke.

Paul Crowther
By email

Countdown begins to the next festivities

Can I be the first to tell readers from today (January 7) – there are only 352 days until Christmas?

I wonder when the first adverts for toys will appear on TV and the first cards will be on sale in stores?

Around early September I'd say judging by last year.

Lucy Pearce
By email

Money being poured down the drains

The annual cost of removing pesticide residues from drinking water is £120 million.

What millions do heavy metals, contraceptive, other hormones and prescription drug contamination of drinking water cost? Water purification is done but accidents and human error can happen during the steady decline of service provision in England.

Over 137,000 people lost their jobs over the last three months with little prospect of gainful employment in the worst recession since 30s. Job centre staff in Liverpool openly poked fun at jobseekers in circulated emails.

The slums of the future (cheap, high density flats) are taking over suburbs, cities and any available building site in counties – short on hospitals or affordable dentists (doctors can now earn almost £300,000 per year, nurse practitioners £100,000, but patient services are unaffordable). Councils boast about getting supermarkets and developers to provide infrastructure as part of their planning brief. A free market economy has turned England into Little America with all the downsides of the USA.

Are chuckle heads in charge? what about the latest New Local (Lunatic) Government Network claptrap to rename roads with local heroes' names whatever that means, Beckham for Manchester, even though he is hardly a local.

Rita Grootendorst
by email

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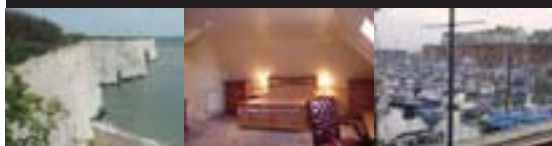
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LEGENDS OF ROCK: Status Quo will play Bedgebury Pinetum & Forest's first concert of the summer – tickets are likely to sell extremely quickly

Your Quota of solace

Summer concerts to banish winter blues

AFTER all the festive excitement, cast your mind ahead to the entertainment treats that 2009 will bring.

It is never too early to think about the summer, so banish those winter blues with thoughts of warm sun on your back and great music in your ears.

Bedgebury National Pinetum & Forest has announced the line-up for its big summer concerts, and music fans can look forward to another fantastic weekend.

On the Saturday, legendary rockers Status Quo will be filling the forest air with their unmistakable sound.

Tickets for Quo's outdoor gigs always sell out quickly, so book soon to avoid missing out on this musical treat. The band last played at Bedgebury three years ago and, having sold out three forest concerts last year, are looking forward to returning to the Kent setting.

Having been in the business for five decades, Status Quo are a rock'n'roll institution. They have sold more than 118 million records worldwide and scored more than 63 hit UK singles, more than any other band.

Their records have spent more than seven and a half years in the charts and they made 106 appearances on Top of the Pops.

In a real change of tone, the Sunday will see Katherine Jenkins dazzling the audience with her spectacular voice. A true symbol of girl power, the classical superstar's fifth album outsold the likes of Girls Aloud and the Spice Girls. At just 28,

SUMMER CONCERTS

Saturday and Sunday, June 6-7,
Bedgebury National Pinetum & Forest,
Goudhurst

she is already the fastest-selling soprano ever, with global record sales of more than three million.

She will be accompanied by the National Symphony Orchestra as she demonstrates the versatile voice that has allowed her to sing everything from the great arias of opera to the Hollywood classics.

Tickets cost £32 for Status Quo and £32.50 for Katherine Jenkins, subject to a booking fee. To book, phone the ticket hotline on 01842 814612, buy online at www.forestry.gov.uk/music, or go to the Bedgebury visitor centre.

The Bedgebury concerts are just two of the exciting events happening in Kent later this year. Canterbury's Lounge on the Farm is back during July 10-12 and music lovers can look forward to another great weekend of music. For updates, you can visit www.loungeonthefarm.co.uk.

After a mixed reaction to the Zoo8 event last summer, Port Lympne Wild Animal Park, near Hythe, pledged to return with an improved festival for 2009. Line-up and ticket details are still to be announced.

Sellindge Music Festival became a fully-fledged music event for the first time last year, attracting Idlewild as its headline act.

Tickets go on sale this month for the three-day event, which returns to Hope Farm, near Ashford, from June 5-7. You can find out more at www.sellindgemusicfestival.co.uk.



BIG VOICE: Soprano Katherine Jenkins

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KEITH JAMES AND RICK FOOT

Wednesday, January 14
The Man of Kent, Rochester

THE music of songwriter Nick Drake can be heard live as two talented musicians pay tribute to his gift.

Singer/songwriter Keith James and double bass player Rick Foot perform the music that has made the ill-fated star such an enduring influence. Their 11th tour started last year, in what would have been Drake's 60th year.

Born in India in 1948, Drake learned to play the piano, clarinet and saxophone as a child. He signed to Island Records at the age of 20 and released three albums during his lifetime but none of these achieved big sales figures, with Drake reluctant to publicise them.



Suffering from insomnia and depression he became reclusive and eventually withdrew to his parents' rural Warwickshire home, where he died from an overdose of antidepressants at the age of 26.

Since his death Drake's

music has gradually found an audience and he is now considered to be one of the most influential songwriters in the acoustic music world.

The concert starts at 8.30pm. For details see www.keith-james.com or www.songsofnickdrake.com.

NEW SEASON

Various dates
The Brook Theatre, Chatham

BANISH post-Christmas blues with a look ahead at The Brook Theatre.

Among the entertainment

on offer this month is the Bully Wee Band, which brings its acoustic folk rock to Medway on January 22.

The eclectic line-up for February includes Latin, jazz and salsa quintet Heads South, Another Night of Comedy With Doug Hudson

and Blunderbus's magical production of The Rainbow Fish.

Micky Flanagan, an Ifcomedy Award nominee in 2007, will be getting March off to a hilarious start with his stand-up act and music fans can satisfy their appetite with the Feast of Fiddles. Get ready for a high-kicking extravaganza when the McManigan Academy of Dance performs the St Patrick's Party: Sounds of Thunder.

Ivan Brackenbury (pictured) pays an out-of-season visit in April with his Hospital Radio Christmas Show. The award-winning comic character discovers his radio slot is under threat in his latest show.

For more information on the upcoming season visit the website at www.medway.gov.uk/theatres.

Tickets can be booked online or by calling the box office on 01634 338338.



NEW SEASON

Various dates
Orchard Theatre, Dartford

FROM the Circus of Horrors to the magical world of the Nutcracker, the Orchard Theatre has something for everyone this season.

Start the New Year with a laugh as Jimmy Carr and Jethro visit Dartford, or rock out to One Night of Queen or Letz Zep.

February's highlights include

Moscow City Ballet's The Nutcracker (pictured), Paul Carrack, All Star Super Slam Wrestling, Go West, Ed Byrne and a double show from Hayley Westenra and Jonathan Ansell.

Be gripped by Agatha Christie's Murder On Air, be rocked by The Meat Rock Opera or be transported to Verdi's spectacular opera Aida. Join Basil Brush for some High Skool Mania or become a dancing queen to

the sounds of Bjorn Again. Bring March to a close with the fantastic stand-up comic Ross Noble or treat the kids to Tweenies Live.

April's offerings include Victoria Wood's Dinnerladies, The Russian Ice Stars in Cirque de Glace and An Audience With Jake & Elwood: The Best Blues Brothers.

Full listings can be found at www.orchardtheatre.co.uk or call the box office on 01322 220000.

MEDWAY LEISURE

God's football comedy is funny, it's official

A REFEREE is kidnapped by two clueless football fans in Robert Farquar's comedy God's Official.

When the ref's decision condemns Cliff and Degsy's team to relegation, they take revenge by abducting him.

The show features adult themes and strong language. It will be staged in the Studio Theatre at the Brook Theatre in Chatham tonight, starting at 7.45pm. Tickets cost £6, call 01634 338338 or visit www.medway.gov.uk/theatres.

Rock with Henry and his band at Lower Bell

FANS of classic rock and indie music should head down to the Lower Bell this week for some great live tunes.

Henry's Rock Band will be performing live at the pub in Chatham Road, Aylesford, on Friday. Find out more about them and hear some tracks at www.myspace.com/henrysrockband.

For more information about the venue call the pub on 01634 861127 or see www.lowerbell.com.

Pub provides the mic, you just need to sing

MUSICIANS and singers are invited to take part in an acoustic open mic night at a Gillingham pub tonight.

A PA system and some instruments are supplied during the event at the Barge in Layfield Road.

The pub also hosts regular quiz nights and live music from local bands.

For full listings of upcoming events, see www.thebargepub.co.uk or call the pub on 01634 850485 for details.

Publicise your upcoming events on these pages

WOULD you like to see your concert, production or event publicised on these pages?

Send full details of your event to jane.connolly@kosmedia.co.uk or by post to the address on page 2. Submissions should arrive at least two weeks before the preferred date of publication.

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The Jimmy Brown Song performed
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Medway band UpCDownC are the
latest to perform on The Ether



Top five Kent gigs

1. Intraverse - 13/2/09 at Style & Winch in Maidstone
2. Shychlo And The Boys - 27/2/09 at The Westcoast Bar in Margate
3. A Thousand Ways To Fall - 12/3/09 at The Beercart Arms in Canterbury
4. Blackburner - 13/3/09 at Snowdon Colliery Welfare Club in Aylesham
5. Kayley Weller - 28/3/09 at The Alma in Deal

Anarchy night Taps into some rocking new acts

■ BY SIMON ROBINSON

A HOST of up-and-coming bands has been lined up to play at the Tap'n'Tin this month – giving music fans the chance to catch a glimpse of the industry's next best things.

Seven groups will take to the stage in the coming weeks, performing at the Chatham venue's Anarchy All Ages club night, open to anyone over the age of 16.

First up on Sunday (January 11) is The Chase, with support coming from Fate Of A Stranger and The Startover.

Lower Than Atlantis headline the next Anarchy night on Sunday, January 25, with Pay No Respect, Breaking The Day and Trial Of Fifty also on the bill. Tickets cost £6, or £5 with an Anarchy wristband.

For more details, visit www.tapntin.co.uk.

Here's a selection of short band biogs to whet your appetite:

The Chase

The unsigned London five-piece cite Foo Fighters, Oasis and The Killers among their influences, but their sound is more akin to the American emo-rock favoured by the likes of Fallout Boy and Panic At The Disco.

Later this month the band will set off on a seven-date UK tour with Farewell City and Scarlet Desire in tow. Having built up a 21,000-strong army of online fans, this could be the year The Chase break through.

See www.myspace.com/thechaseuk.

Fate of a Stranger

Fellow Luton-based emo-rockers Fate Of A Stranger offer a "self-styled brand of post-



TUNE IN: The Chase and Lower Than Atlantis, right, are just two of the great bands set to play at Chatham's Tap'n'Tin

hardcore rock", with driving guitar riffs and catchy vocals drawing a legion of admiring fans.

See www.myspace.com/fateofastrangeruk.

The Startover

The lively quartet describe their sound as a fusion of rock, punk and alternative genres. Simple, well-written songs will see their popularity blossom in the coming months.



If you miss the Tap gig, you can catch The Startover live on three occasions in Maidstone next month.

See www.myspace.com/thisisthestartover.

Lower Than Atlantis

Watford-born four-piece rockers Lower Than Atlantis, who are signed to the Thirty Days Of Night label, come to Medway on Sunday, January 25, and are sure to test the venue's sound system.

All the rock essentials are there – fast guitars, loud vocals and bundles of energy.

Pay No Respect

Heavier than the night's headliners, Pay No Respect offer the darker side to the rock scene – dishing out three-minute songs of screamed vocals and menacing drum beats.

See www.myspace.com/paynorespect.

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MEDWAY SHOPPING



Make Becky's the place to start your New Year

BECKY'S Beauty Room, based at the Roffen Club in Rochester, opened in May. The salon and spa treatments have earned a loyal customer base from people who like their treatment with the personal touch.

Beauty therapist Becky Williams previously ran the spa training at Rowhill Grange in Wilmington.

She has now taken all she has learnt to Medway – building up a large following and a good reputation mainly by word of mouth.

Currently very popular is the catiolift facial from Mary Cohr, which is a non-surgical procedure that uses an electric current to stimulate the skin by making muscles contract. It helps to define features, and reduce lines.

"I chose the Roffen Club because it has enabled me to provide Spa Days for non-members," said Becky.

"They start from £50 and include a full body massage, two course lunch in the restaurant and full use of all facilities. My experience has taught me how to make each treatment extra special and relaxing."

The salon is open from Tuesday through to Saturday and gift vouchers can be purchased.

Contact Becky on 01634 405339 or visit www.beckysbeautyroom.co.uk.

Stretch yourself to ease those aches and pains

IF the thought of heading back to the gym fills you with dread, yoga could be the new hobby for you this year.

As well as increasing flexibility and promoting relaxation, yoga has been shown to alleviate the symptoms of common complaints such as backache, PMS, IBS, anxiety, insomnia and stress.

The Yoga Sanctuary in Barham is a designated yoga space, designed by teachers Cheryl Rivers and Caroline Bindon-Blood. Call 01227 720061 or 01227 711258 or visit www.theyoga-sanctuary.co.uk.

Step up to the exercise challenge with DVDs

SHAPE up in celebrity style with fitness DVDs from singer Claire Richards and Loose Women star Coleen Nolan.

Former Steps star Richards lost five stone and went down five dress sizes with her 5 Step Fat Attack.

Or try Nolan's Disco Burn. Having lost three stone last year for Rosemary Conley's Brand New You DVD, she has now lost a further two by dancing and grooving.

Both DVDs are priced at £19.99.

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YOUR TV REVIEW

OZ AND JAMES DRINK TO BRITAIN
BBC Two, 8pm, Tuesday
DANCING ON ICE
ITV1, 7pm, Sunday

■ BY TOM BETTS

WHEN James May lolled his way onto our screens a few years ago he hardly seemed the domineering type.

But it's hard to escape "Captain Slow" these days and difficult to turn on the TV without seeing that slightly bemused expression peering back at you from behind one of the country's worst haircuts.

From his 20th Century show, to Top Toys, Big Ideas and, of course, Top Gear, which led him to stardom, May is everywhere.

His meteoric rise has echoed Richard Hammond's, who could also fill an entire channel with his shows.

Both are no doubt laughing all the way to the bank.

May's latest show sees him once more teaming up with Oz Clarke, the slightly over-the-top wine expert, to get drunk.

Unlike the last adventures when these two lucky chaps set out on Oz and James's Big Wine Adventure (undoubtedly inspired by the excellent film Sideways) the focus this time is more on brilliant beers than blinding Bordeaux.

The pair will travel through Britain and Ireland to marvel at all things alcoholic in a 1982 Rolls Royce Corniche. Nice work if you can get it.

The two previous series were an enjoyable enough romp as the scruffy May was time and again upstaged by the Clarke palette, leading to much entertaining alcohol-fuelled bickering, so expect more of the same this time around.



ON ICE: With Celebrity Big Brother already clogging up our schedules, brace yourself for more reality telly with Dancing On Ice

Just when you thought it was safe to return to the sofa on a weekend night, after the seemingly endless run of The X Factor and Strictly Come Dancing, ITV deal us all a real hammer blow and schedule the return of Dancing On Ice.

The whole shebang is another celebrity-led affair, of course, and I fear TV channels have long since given up with the general public.

Hollyoaks nearly man Jeremy Edwards, EastEnders' Todd Carty and various other soap nobodies will prance around on the slippery stuff for the agonisingly long 12-week run while rink royalty Torvill and Dean will once more be tormentors in chief.

The main talking point of the series last year was the plunging neckline of Holly Willoughby's frocks, which says a lot for the actual 90 minutes of skating offered up each week.

The nightmare begins on Sunday. Don't know about you but I'm bored of 2009 already.

YOUR WEEK'S HOROSCOPE

BY RUSSELL GRANT



AQUARIUS (Jan 21-Feb 19)

YOUR star is on the rise. Don't be surprised if you are given an important leadership position. People respect your ideas and are willing to follow your advice. Improving a school, house of worship, or cultural institution may take up the lion's share of your time this year.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Aquarius** 09067-531762



TAURUS (Apr 21-May 21)

2009 promises to be one of the best years ever career-wise. Opportunities related to broadcasting, computers, or airline travel are looking good. You could also find a good position related to education, travel, or publishing. If you'd like to break into another industry ask a friend.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Taurus** 09067-531753



LEO (Jul 24-Aug 23)

THERE'S never been a better year to get married or start a business. Two heads are better than one. If you join finances with somebody, your fortune will increase. If you're single, this would be good time to consult a money manager. News regarding a job could reach your ears.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Leo** 09067-531756



SCORPIO (Oct 24-Nov 22)

SUPPORT from friends and family helps you make several breakthroughs. Don't be afraid to get counselling for a problem. Putting this issue to rest will liberate you. Romance could burst into flower this week. You're especially drawn to a shy artist who is quite spiritual.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Scorpio** 09067-531759



PISCES (Feb 20-Mar 20)

IT may feel as if you're surrounded by a protective shield this year. While others have problems you seem to be riding high without a care in the world. Starting this week, you'll have more time for hobbies. Ask your partner how they see your future and start making plans.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Pisces** 09067-531763



GEMINI (May 22-Jun 22)

AN opportunity to expand your horizons will come your way. Going back to school, writing a book, or living abroad could be in the cards. It's possible your job will prompt this venture. You may be hesitant to make such a move. Eventually, though, you'll enjoy this turn of events.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Gemini** 09067-531754



VIRGO (Aug 24-Sep 23)

IF you ever wanted to start your own business, this is the year to do it. You'll find clients at every turn. If you fulfil your responsibilities you will reach a new level of professional success. When your knees threaten to buckle under your responsibilities, turn to a loved one.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Virgo** 09067-531757



SAGITTARIUS (Nov 23-Dec 22)

TAKING or teaching a class will lend insight to philosophical matters. It's possible you'll adopt a religious philosophy or spiritual outlook. Repainting a drab room could make a tremendous difference to your mood. Your leadership ability could help you land a lucrative job.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Sagittarius** 09067-531760



ARIES (Mar 21-Apr 20)

SPENDING more time on solitary pleasures will help you recover from a hectic festive season. Friends will assume an increased importance in your life. When you feel overwhelmed ask your loved ones for help. They'll be happy to help. Open your heart and be receptive.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Aries** 09067-531752



CANCER (Jun 23-Jul 23)

YOUR love life gets a boost this year. You could meet someone special at a house of worship, adult classroom, or library. Keep your eyes open for an offbeat rebel with a generous spirit. If you're in a relationship, 2009 is a good time to make a major change in your home or career.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Cancer** 09067-531755



LIBRA (Sep 24-Oct 23)

THIS week kicks off a period of fun, romance, and adventure. It's possible that you'll be able to mix business with pleasure. When you have a little extra money, invest it in your wardrobe. When you look good, you feel good. A relative may be poised to give you the financing.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Libra** 09067-531758



CAPRICORN (Dec 22-Jan 20)

YOUR income is in for a boost. A rise helps you afford luxuries previously beyond reach. Be sure to spend a portion of your cash on an overseas trip. A love letter or birthday message puts a spring in your step. Don't hesitate to propose bold plans. You never know who is listening.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Capricorn** 09067-531761

Calls cost 75p per minute. Service provided by g8wave London N7

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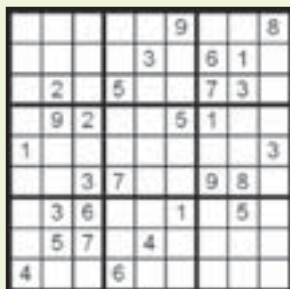
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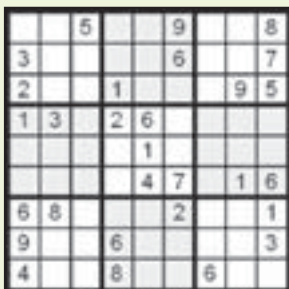
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EASY



MEDIUM



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CRYPTIC CLUES

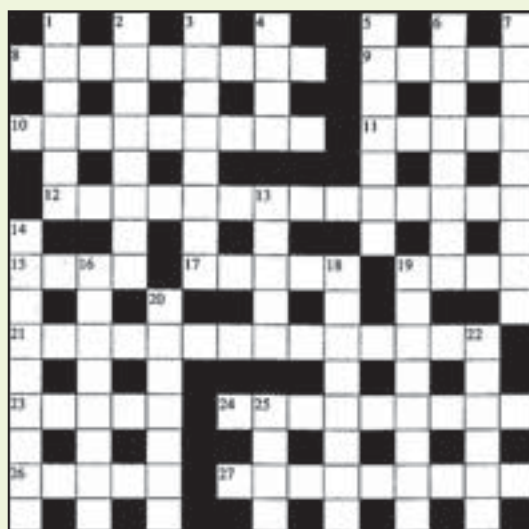
ACROSS

- 8 Underground room in the act had been decoded (9)
9 During tremor a grand lady appeared (5)
10 Post Office (9)
11 Comfort companion at all times (5)
12 Putting a stop to something after one's had a bath (7,3,4)
15 Not the whole role (4)
17 Search into books for information about dig (5)
19 Piquancy of orange-peel (4)
21 Reprimand for having to score goal perhaps in one's underwear (4,2,3,5)
23 Daughter in rain moved to lowest point (5)
24 A way Ronald has with gold model, a spaceman (9)
26 Produced a bloomer using lower mouthpiece (5)
27 Additional part for accomplice (9)

DOWN

- 1 Get back, are lacking a successful move (6)
2 Bet Clare could remove ornamental chain (8)
3 With this one is not prejudiced to receive and consider new ideas (4,4)
4 We're endlessly going round one dam (4)
5 Kiss for £!! (7)
6 Real sportsman who is unswervingly faithful (4-4)
7 Total of materials used with cement to form concrete (9)
13 Pull up child from deep valley (5)
14 Said quartet said to be reserved (6,3)
16 Carol held redirected to town near Manchester (8)
18 One selling overseas was stout (8)
19 Clownishness of last character Annie performing on board (8)
20 Mess is putrid, I leave to break up (7)
22 Unimportant person quits turning runs inside (6)
25 Clothing cassocks hide (4)

SCRIBBLE HERE



QUICK CLUES

ACROSS

- 8 SW US state (3,6)
9 Farewell (5)
10 Obstacle (9)
11 Roman (anag.) (5)
12 Not good enough (14)
15 Roman garment (4)
17 Just (5)
19 Machine-gun (4)
21 Mathematical term (6,8)
23 Reward (5)
24 Temperate (9)
26 Steel mast (5)
27 Immunise (9)

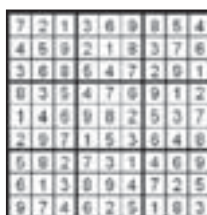
DOWN

- 1 Unpleasant familiar illusion (4,2)
2 Food of the gods (8)
3 Man appointed by testator (8)
4 Frozen (4)
5 Hanging bed (7)
6 Postings (anag.) (8)
7 Extracting from open excavation (9)
13 Sweetener (5)
14 Tall silk hat (9)
16 Easily tricked (8)
18 Sound of a clock (4-4)
19 Rotating (8)
20 Pepper (7)
22 Fourscore and ten (6)
25 Heehaw (4)

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS

SUDOKU SOLUTIONS No68

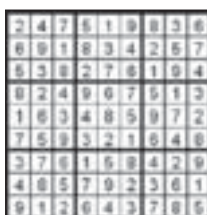
EASY



MEDIUM



HARD



Answers to all of this week's quizzes can be found on our website

CRYPTIC SOLUTION No68

ACROSS: 1 Capsicum 6 Bedsit 9 Vandal 10 Linotype 11 Lacking drive 13 Globe 14 Angletworm 17 Coagulate 19 Cruise 21 Well-informed 24 Physique 25 De-icer 26 Writhe 27 Unevenly. DOWN: 2 Ajax 3 Saddlebag 4 Calico 5 Million 6 Benignly 7 Deter 8 Impoverish 12 Altogether 15 Worldwide 16 Clinique 18 Thoreau 20 Smudge 22 Liszt 23 Peal.

QUICK SOLUTION No69

Cayenne 22 Ninety 25 Bray. Guille 18 Tick-tock 19 Spinning 20 Quarry 13 Sugar 14 Slope 16 Excavate 4 Lead 5 Hammock 6 Simpost 7 Vaccine 24 Absentment 26 Pylon 27. Toad 17 Right 19 Sten 21 Vulgar fraction 23 Pigeon 12 Unsubstantiated 15 Barrack 11 Mexico 9 Adieu 10

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Your very own prison break

■ BY JANE CONNOLLY

ANYONE who fancies spending the night behind bars will want to break into Malmaison Oxford.

The former Victorian prison has been converted into a luxurious boutique hotel, which offers a real change of scene for law-abiding travellers. A million miles away from the identikit feel of many chain hotels, this unusual and striking site is the perfect base from which to explore the equally engaging city of Oxford.

Easy to reach by car and just five minutes' walk from the railway station, the hotel is just around the corner from the city's main shopping streets. Parking is limited and it is recommended visitors book a space in advance.

We were welcomed into the dramatic reception by polite and immaculately presented staff and the level of service never dropped from then on. Our luggage and car could be left in their good hands well before the 3pm check-in, allowing us to go off and explore at our leisure.

I was unsure how it would feel to be accommodated in a former prison and the main building still boasts its gantries and original cell doors. But soft lighting and tasteful furnishings meant that although the place was undeniably atmospheric, there was nothing gloomy about it.

Our room was in the House of Corrections and did not have as many original features as rooms in the main building, but it still had deep-set stone window frames and looked out onto the large courtyard.

The room was large with a lovely modern bathroom and the chic decor incorporated clever references to the site's former function. Cushions made of rough blanket fabric perched on the crisp white sheets and luxurious throw, while a complimentary pair of pink handcuffs added a touch of humour.



IN THE CLINK: Malmaison is a stunningly converted Victorian prison, and gives a break to Oxford an unusual twist

Dinner in the cosy subterranean brasserie was a real treat, with the hotel paying as much attention to the quality of the food as to the service and ambience. Best of all, you would not need to rob a bank to enjoy a meal there.

Our starters of jabugo iberico ham (£8) and Oxford blue cheese fondue (£6.95) were delicious, while the main courses were mouth-watering. I ordered the delicious roasted breast of duck with garlic cream potato (£16.95) and my husband could not praise his slow-cooked belly pork (£12.95) enough. We finished the meal with a light crème brûlée (£5.95) and ice cream respectively, before retiring to the funky bar for a nightcap.

Breakfast made a refreshing change to the slapdash affair found in many hotels. Our

superb cooked breakfasts – full English for him, eggs Benedict with bacon for me – cost £13.95 and included all we could eat from the impressively rustic buffet.

Oxford itself is a hugely attractive city, with beautiful buildings wherever you look in the centre and plenty to explore. It is also excellent for shopping, offering an extensive choice of high street stores and an apparently thriving array of independent traders. We will definitely be making a return visit and would highly recommend the Malmaison Oxford as somewhere to enjoy a memorable prison break.

Prices start from £150 per room, per night. Parking costs £20 for 24 hours.

• Malmaison Oxford, Oxford Castle, Oxford
Telephone: 01865 268400 www.malmaison.com



Travel details

Accessibility: It takes less than two hours to reach Oxford from Kent as the city is connected to London and the M25 by the M40. Parking in the city centre is limited but visitors can take advantage of the Park & Ride system. There is a frequent rail service, taking approximately an hour, from London Paddington to Oxford.

What to see: Students who attend Oxford's world-renowned university study in beautiful buildings that can be admired around the city centre. Duke Humfrey's Library and the Divinity School in the Bodleian Library have both doubled for rooms in Hogwarts in the Harry Potter films. The stunning Christ Church College, with its cathedral, choir, meadow and picture gallery, is one of the highlights of any tour.

Explore the city with a variety of guided, DIY and bus tours which take in the architecture and history of this fascinating city. Just eight miles outside Oxford is the magnificent Blenheim Palace, birthplace of Sir Winston Churchill and home to the 11th Duke of Marlborough. For more ideas visit www.visitoxford.org.



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MOTORS NEWS



SMC's smack in the eye for the recession

KENT dealer group SMC has kicked off 2009 with a recession-busting sale at its Ford and Mitsubishi outlets with savings of more than £15,000 possible against list prices on new cars and many bargains on used stock.

There will also be a prize draw for customers who take advantage of the 'Great SMC Sale' running until January 31.

They could win a large LCD television, Apple iPod Touch or an X-Box 360 games console, with the draw to be held on February 18.

Ford's line-up has just had a further upgrade with the all-new Fiesta (pictured) and also includes the Focus – the UK's no1 seller – the latest Mondeo family model plus award-winning MPVs: the C-Max, sporty S-Max and spacious Galaxy people carrier.

SMC has sites at Crayford, Gravesend and Sittingbourne.



Fiat gadget helps drivers cut costs and emissions

FIAT claims thousands of motorists using its eco:Drive fuel-saving advice device since launch in October, have saved more than 163,000kg of CO2.

The free-of-charge tool helps drivers understand and adjust the impact of their driving style on fuel consumption and CO2 emissions.

Using a USB stick plugged into the car's dashboard, eco:Drive records detailed information about the vehicle and how it is driven, which can be uploaded on to a computer (see picture). It then gives an analysis of the driver's performance, along with suggestions on how to improve efficiency further by improving driving methods.

"eco:Drive offers real benefits, helping drivers improve driving efficiency, saving fuel and reducing their impact on the environment," says Andrew Humberstone of Fiat Group Automobiles UK.

People using eco:Drive can become part of eco:Ville, an online community. Members have used it to offer ideas and feedback over the last three months, which Fiat has responded to – already the company has released four enhanced versions of the system.

Next year eco:Drive will become available for use in the Fiat Bravo and Qubo – it already features in Fiat 500 and Grande Punto models – and there are plans to further widen the scope of the technology across the entire range.



PRESSURE IS ON: The new Vauxhall Corsa is giving the Fiesta a run for its money with sharper styling and elements to appeal to a variety of supermini buyers

Strong Corsa is out to spoil Fiesta-time

BRITAIN'S supermini race tends to be a two-horse tussle between the Ford Fiesta and Vauxhall Corsa and the latter might be expected to be under pressure now from the all-new Ford.

But don't jump to conclusions; the Vauxhall has been exceptionally dominant while waiting for the new generation Ford and won't be giving ground easily.

The Corsa is more sharply styled than before and can court different categories of buyer: the low slung three-door attracts younger buyers, while the smart yet more practical five-door caters for families and older customers.

Where the old Corsa had also started to look low rent inside, against supermini rivals and newer Vauxhall models, the latest is a paragon of quality, using high grade materials and brighter interior colours and trims.

The steering wheel is adjustable for height and reach on most models, the seats are higher quality and the dash is attractive and well-organised. Underlining the car's youthful

ROAD TEST VAUXHALL CORSA

BY STEVE LOADER

STAR QUALITY

Driving appeal	★★★★★
Image	★★★★★
Space	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★
Running costs	★★★★★
Reliability	★★★★★
Green rating	★★★★★

appeal, there is also an MP3 audio connection on most models.

Leg, shoulder and headroom front and rear has increased across the board and Vauxhall claims the cabin is one of the quietest in its class, with reduced NVH (noise, vibration and harshness). Having driven several versions now, I can't argue with that and the car handles and rides in a much tidier fashion than of old too – there is even a cracking little VXR 'pocket rocket' model.

As more of us downsize in search of greener motoring or convenience, the new Corsa also falls into what I call the 'supersize-me-mini' segment, typified by the latest Renault Clio, Fiat Punto and Peugeot 207. These bigger superminis deliver greater crash protection and retain some big car comforts for owners seeking to reduce both their physical and carbon footprint on the roads.

The 1.4 Club is the best seller – Club is the mid-range trim above Expression and Life, while the 1.4i petrol engine delivers a balance of economy, power and refinement. But it is the SXi tested here (list price £10,550) that cuts a dash with its sporty looks and smart alloys as standard.



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VAUXHALL

Official Government Test Environmental Data - Fuel Consumption Figures mpg (litres/100km): Corsa range: urban 26.9 (10.5) - 49.6 (5.7), extra-urban 44.1 (6.4) - 74.3 (3.8), combined 35.8 (7.9) - 62.8 (4.5), CO₂ Emissions 119 - 190g/km.

Model shown has optional 17-inch alloy wheels available at extra cost. Up to 74.3mpg figure refers to extra-urban cycle on the Corsa 1.3CDTi (75PS). £35 refers to annual road tax cost on Corsa 1.3CDTi (75PS) models. No deposit 0% finance available on selected Corsa models. Finance by GMAC UK plc. applicants must be aged 18 or over. Finance offer available at participating retailers only. Offers may not apply to all retailer stocks. UK supplied vehicles only. A guarantee and/or indemnity may be required. Ecoflex offer is available on selected engines and applies to the trade in and agreement to scrap one vehicle only. To qualify for this offer, a customer must purchase one of the eligible models, trade in a vehicle and agree to scrap the vehicle. The trade in vehicle must have been registered in the name of the customer prior to 30.06.08. Vehicle must be able to be driven on the highway. The customer must supply a vehicle registration document (V5C) and a valid MOT certificate to the retailer for the trade in vehicle. Vauxhall will ensure the vehicle is scrapped under the end of life vehicle directive and a certificate of destruction will be held by the retailer. If the customer agrees to scrap the vehicle a total of £1000 (inc. VAT) will be paid towards the purchase of a new eligible model irrespective of the current market value of their vehicle. For more details on this offer and the eligible models go to www.offers.vauxhall.co.uk or visit your local retailer. Offers available to private individuals, Vauxhall Partners and small businesses 1-24 (purchase only). All other sales categories are excluded. All offers apply to selected new vehicles ordered or registered between 03.12.08 and 02.02.09, and are subject to status, eligibility, terms and conditions. (Vaux63796)

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Agila

Year	Reg	Model	Eng	Dr	Colour	M/age	£
01	51	Agila Enjoy	1.2	5	Green tea	76,350	2,595
08	08	Agila Design	1.2	5	Atlanta blue	1,750	9,350

Tigra

Year	Reg	Model	Eng	Dr	Colour	M/age	£
06	06	Tigra Exclusiv	1.4	2	Star silver	15,975	9,495
08	08	Tigra Exclusiv	1.4	2	Antigua	9,650	11,995

Astra

Year	Reg	Model	Eng	Dr	Colour	M/age	£
00	00*	Astra Club Auto	1.6	5	Silver	37,000	2,695
05	55	Astra Breeze	1.6	5	Silver lightening	38,000	6,795
06	06	Astra Sxi CDTi	1.7D	5	Silver lightening	20,850	7,695
07	07	Astra Energy Auto	1.8	5	Star Silver	15,300	7,575
07	57	Astra Club CDTi Est	1.3D	5	Panacotta	8,275	9,995
07	57	Astra Club CDTi	1.7D	5	Star silver	10,680	9,695
07	57	Astra SRI	1.8	5	Silver Lightning	9,650	8,995
07	57	Astra Sport Twin Top	1.8	2	Star Silver	14,650	11,995
08	57	Astra Breeze Plus	1.7D	5	Star silver	12,300	10,995
08	57	Astra Club CDTi Est	1.3D	5	Star silver	17,300	10,495
08	08	Astra SXI	1.4	5	Black Sapphire	6,300	9,495
08	08	Astra Breeze CDTi	1.7D	5	Star Silver	9,350	10,495
08	08	Exclusive IS200 Conv	1.9D	2	Black	8,885	16,995
08	08	Sxi Sports Hatch	1.4	3	Star silver	7,350	9,995
08	08	Sri CDTi Ext pack	1.9D	5	Star silver	5,630	13,995
08	08	Sxi Sports Hatch	1.4	3	Black sapphire	3,200	9,995
08	08	Astra Club Auto	1.8	5	Star silver	3,460	10,895
08	08	Astra Sxi	1.6	5	Moonland	4,500	9,495
08	08	Astra Breeze Plus	1.4	3	Black sapphire	TBA	10,495
08	08	Astra Breeze	1.4	5	Black sapphire	TBA	9,995

Signum

Year	Reg	Model	Eng	Dr	Colour	M/age	£
07	57	Exclusiv CDTi Nav	1.9D	5	Star silver	9,950	12,995

Corsa

Year	Reg	Model	Eng	Dr	Colour	M/age	£
06	56	Corsa Design	1.4	3	Air blue	15,800	7,495
08	08	Corsa VXR	1.6	3	Arden blue	4,700	13,995
06	56	Corsa Design	1.4	3	Air blue	15,800	7,495
08	08	Corsa VXR	1.6	3	Arden blue	4,700	13,995
08	08	Corsa Design	1.4	3	Star silver	TBA	10,495
08	08	Corsa Design CDTi	1.3D	5	Metro blue	TBA	11,345
08	08	Corsa Design	1.3D	3	Star silver	TBA	10,495
08	08	Corsa Breeze CDTi	1.3D	3	Star silver	TBA	9,795
08	08	Corsa Breeze CDTi	1.3D	3	Flame red	TBA	9,495
08	08	Corsa Breeze CDTi	1.3D	3	Star silver	TBA	9,795
08	08	Corsa Breeze CDTi	1.3D	3	Star silver	TBA	9,795
08	08	Corsa Breeze CDTi	1.3D	3	Star silver	TBA	9,795

Meriva

Year	Reg	Model	Eng	Dr	Colour	M/age	£
04	04	Meriva Life A/c	1.6	5	Spearmint silver	43,000	4,695
06	56	Design CDTi Ext pack	1.7D	5	Metro blue	29,170	7,995
08	08	Meriva CDTi Breeze +	1.3D	5	Star silver	3,350	11,995
08	08	Meriva Life A/c	1.4	5	Lancelot	2,870	8,495
08	08	Meriva Breeze	1.4	5	Black sapphire	12,500	8,995

Vectra

Year	Reg	Model	Eng	Dr	Colour	M/age	£
05	05	Vectra Sri	2.2	5	Star silver	30,550	6,995
08	57	CDTi Excl Auto	1.9D	5	Ultra blue	5,350	11,995
08	08	Exclusive CDTi	1.9D	5	Silver	9,380	10,495
08	08	Vectra Exclusiv	1.8	5	Black sapphire	6,000	8,495

Zafira

Year	Reg	Model	Eng	Dr	Colour	M/age	£
05	05	Zafira Life	1.8	5	Ultra blue	38,250	5,995
05	05	Zafira Design	1.6	5	Star silver	39,000	6,195
05	05	Zafira Life A/c	1.8	5	Star silver	52,300	5,995
05	55	New Zafira Life A/c	1.6	5	Flame red	31,650	6,995
08	08	New Breeze CDTi +	1.9D	5	Star silver	3,985	13,995
08	08	Zafira Club CDTi	1.9D	5	Star silver	8,500	12,495

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USED CAR ROUND-UP: OUR PICK FROM A KEY SECTOR

USED SMALL SUPERMINI/MPVS

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SO successful has been the MPV (multi-purpose vehicle) or 'people carrier' concept that its influence has carried over to other car sectors. None more so than superminis, where designs are tending to be taller and more flexible, with 'smart' seating arrangements, extra headroom and load-lugging ability. None of the trio here would win styling prizes, but such versatility comes as standard and they are probably the closest to being the market's jacks of all trades'. After several years on the market, affordable examples should be easy to find too.

VAUXHALL MERIVA



NOT quite as influential as Vauxhall's bigger Zafira perhaps, but the Meriva has become a popular used buy with families seeking a manageable yet capacious family holdall. The car drives and handles well and offers a higher driving position than equivalent family hatches and estates, without being ridiculously lofty. Add Vauxhall's usual versatile 'Flex' system interior features, a reputation for reliability and a good range of engines including diesels and you can see why Meriva used prices can be high.

STAR QUALITY

Driving appeal	★★★★★
Looks and image	★★★★★
Space	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★
Running costs	★★★★★
Reliability	★★★★★
Quality	★★★★★

HONDA JAZZ



HONDAS Jazz has definitely hit the right note and won a host of awards. Beware early examples, which were too firmly sprung for some tastes, but later models are good to drive and better to ride in while retaining cheeky looks and versatile rear seating. The range lacks a diesel, but offers a continuously variable automatic gearbox (CVT) option with pre-selected positions that are reassuring to use, while bringing all the benefits of a CVT auto's better fuel consumption.

STAR QUALITY

Driving appeal	★★★★★
Looks and image	★★★★★
Space	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★
Running costs	★★★★★
Reliability	★★★★★
Quality	★★★★★

NISSAN NOTE



NISSAN threw the rule book away with the Note to create a partial replacement for its long-running yet unloved Almera family hatchback, while also acquiring a small MPV with a more compact stance. The result is a versatile, roomy and manageable small car with lots of clever features including a reversible boot floor that covers a spacious lower compartment. The Note's engines are also good news, with a Renault-supplied 1.5-litre turbodiesel the most desirable, for mixing power with economy.

STAR QUALITY

Driving appeal	★★★★★
Looks and image	★★★★★
Space	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★
Running costs	★★★★★
Reliability	★★★★★
Quality	★★★★★

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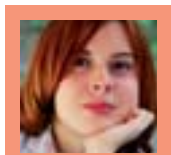
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WOMEN seeking men

SINGLE DAD WANTED
Single mum, 23, nice and curvy, blonde, blue eyes, likes shopping, cinema, animals, WLTW honest, trustworthy male, 28-39, Box 446099 **I LOVE FOOTBALL**
Fun to be with blonde female, 25, 5ft2, loves football, going out and staying in, looking for a like-minded man to be soulmate. Box 446494 **MAYBE MORE**
Seeking fun, friendship, maybe more. WLTW fun man 25-30, I'm female, 26, brown hair/blue eyes, average build. Box 445622 **SMILES**
Hi I'm 27, redhead, 5ft1, blue eyes, intelligent, open-minded, caring, loves going out, music, good meals, seeking friendship, struggles with caring, understanding. Box 446786 **SNUGGLE UP**
Tall, attractive, good hearted African female, 28yr old, enjoys films, good food and cuddles. WLTW a white male for friendship/romance. Box 441654

ON THE LOOKOUT FOR LOVE
37yr old female, 2 kids, slim, brown hair and eyes, 5ft2, looking for a caring, loving, honest and trusting male to be my someone special. Box 446552 **MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE**
Good looking woman, 37, 5ft2, brown hair/eyes, 2 kids, looking for new friends, and hopefully someone special. Box 446039 **SEIZE THE DAY**
Loving female, 38, 5ft4, brown hair, green eyes, likes socialising, staying in, seeks genuine male for friendship and more. Box 428666 **LOVE TO LOVE YOU**
Lovely female, 38, 5ft4, medium-large build, blonde hair, blue eyes, own house, loves walking, going out, the usual Seeking male for long term/serious relationship. Box 438102 **DON'T PASS ME BY**
Cute, single mum of 4, 38yrs old, Kent based, into most things, looking for friendship or possibly romance. Box 887983 **MEND A BROKEN HEART**
Single mum, 37, fun-loving, been hurt in past, looking for nice, genuine guy for hopeful happiness - no time wasters! Box 938053 **FROM ME TO YOU**
Tall leggy brunette, 38, recently bereaved, enjoys meals out or nights in, dry white wine, a good movie & cuddles, seeking a male for companionship. Box 887404

YOU'LL SMILE IF YOU DIAL
Bubbly 40yr old female, enjoys beaches, pubs, clubs, WLTW a like-minded, caring male to share fun times with. Box 435102 **FUN AND ROMANCE**
Attractive woman, 41, 5ft6, blonde hair/blue eyes, I'd like to meet a guy for romance and fun, I enjoy cinema, pubs, meals out. Box 447009 **PASSION FOR YOU**
Medium build woman, 41, 5ft2, kind, caring, loving and tactile, GSOH, looking to meet a nice man for a LTR. Box 446890 **COUNTRY LASS**
Searching for love
Country-loving happy lady, 42, green eyes, long curly hair, good figure, looking for a genuine guy for a serious relationship and happy moments. Box 883723

MISS JULIE
Bubbly blonde, 44, stupid and like having a laugh good company, friendship, would like to meet new friends for hopeful love. Box 888162 **DEAL OR NO DEAL? (IN DEAL)**
Deal-based lady, 43, divorced, brunette, green eyes, 5ft10, likes going out, pubs, clubs, cinema, shopping, walks, loves films and all sports except cricket. Box 430384 **WARM AND ALL THAT JAZZ**
Warm, radiant, witty, intelligent, attractive, black female, Christian, 44, likes music, jazz, travel, art, restaurants, theatre, seeking a cultured, NS, intelligent, gentle gentleman. Box 430375 **COULD IT BE YOU?**
Hi I'm 44, slim, 5ft8, a redhead, love nights out, socialising, looking for friendship initially and hopefully more later on. Box 889800

WHERE R U?
Cheerful, honest, popular blonde, 50yrs old, 5ft2, slim, looking to find an honest, loyal man. I am, call again, leave contact details. Box 887347 **FUNNY GIRL**
Pettie, blonde female, 50, GSOH, likes music, books, films, cooking, looking for romantic soulmate, 40-55, for LTR. Kent. Box 835181 **CARING & PROFESSIONAL**
Female, 49, 5ft4, long hair, slim, likes eating out, the beach, travel, seeks a friendly chap, 48-55. Box 417100 **A NEW MAN FOR THE NEW YEAR**
Sue from Kent, 52, looking for an honest and sincere gentleman to share a loving and committed relationship with. Box 447493 **MEND A BROKEN HEART**
Hard working, kind and caring female, young 52, seeking a genuine man for a relationship, no time wasters please! Box 442486

ONLY LOVE
Classy, intelligent, happy, slim, attractive, fit and active lady, 60, GSOH, enjoys travel, gardening etc. Looking for that special friend to share life with. Box 883791 **TIME ON MY HANDS**
Recently retired female, 60, 5ft1, medium build, very nice person, WLTW a male, similar age, to spend my days with, must be caring! Eastbourne. Box 445698 **Women seeking women**
THAT'S ME
Kind, loving, fun woman, passionate and considerate with a GSOH. I'm 24, 5ft5, and looking for an attractive female to share interests. Box 445340 **FRIENDSHIP, MAYBE MORE**
Curvy female, 32, seeks like-minded woman, for friendship, hopefully fun, dining, socialising, holidays. Box 886142 **LOVE TO LOVE**
Easygoing female, 40, blue eyes, blonde hair, medium build, likes wine, dining, socialising, holidays, walks cinema, seeking likewise female for companionship and more. Box 446953

LOVE ON THE DANCEFLOOR
Outgoing young-minded male, 47, a smoker, likes war games, books, cinema, castles, POLI, seeking similar woman to boogie on the dancefloor with. Box 443750 **LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL**
Fun guy, 41, who enjoys life seeks a like-minded female to share a fun friendship full of adventures, maybe considerate more. Box 883569 **FUN TIMES AHEAD**
Caring 43yr old male, like walks, swimming, sport, dining out and quiet nights in. Looking to meet a female in times with. Box 447329 **CONSIDER THIS!**
Warm and fun-loving 43yr old male, 5ft10, loves beach holidays, nights out, cinema and dancing, WLTW a considerate female with GSOH to enjoy life with. Box 447307 **FUN AND CUDDLY**
42yr old male, 5ft7, blue eyes, enjoys cinema, walking, swimming and cosy nights in. Seeking a damsel to rescue and be happy with. East Sussex. Box 443393 **COME FLY WITH ME**
Honest male, 43, dark hair/blue eyes, 5ft6, likes cinema, walks, holidays, restaurants, seeking romance, love, the woman of my dreams 34-54 for relationship and more. Box 443967

ROMANCE
Passion, laughter
Slim build male, 48, 6ft, dark brown hair, eyes, attractive, animated, confident, eclectic, seeking soulmate 43-53 brevier. Box 446553 **ALL THE FUN OF THE FAIR!**
Youthful dad, 45, 5'10", brown hair, med build, divorcee, likes pubs, cinema, restaurants, there parks. WLTW female, 36-45, slim, for possible LTR. Cranbrook. Box 737520 **LET'S SEE WHERE IT GOES...**
Gentle kind male, 48, 5ft9, medium build, WLTW nice, attractive, friendly, fun to be with lady who likes going out and socialising, for friendship first. Box 442869 **ALL ROMANCE**
Romantic, strong male, 50, non-smoking, I love travel, the coast cinema-theatre, restaurant. Looking for love and laughter with lovely lady. Box 445354 **MAD MAN**
Crazy fun-loving 53yr old guy looking for another crazy lady, non-smoking, to go out/stay in with, likes music, walking, shopping, eating in/out and more. Box 883973

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NO TIMEWASTERS!

Easygoing female, 32, enjoys shopping, football, eating out, cosy night in, WLTW loving, caring white male 35-47 for long term loving relationship. Box 384013

CHANGE OF SCENERY

31yr old bubbly, fun-loving female, likes reading, cinema, looking for tall, dark and handsome male, GSOH, for happy times. Box 438057

CUDDLY FEMALE...

...32, 5ft9, brown hair, curvy, enjoys having fun and a laugh, and WLTW nice, kind gent. Box 439402

HORSES FOR COURSES

Caring, loving, affectionate female, 30, 5'2", blonde, likes walking, horse riding, animals, seeks affectionate male, 30-40, for lasting, loving relationship. Box 384013

ATTENTION! TALL WHITE GUY REQUIRED

Pretty black female, 32, tall, loves watching football, shopping, travel, seeking tall, white, loving male, 34-47, for LTR. Chatham. Box 437778

CANTERBURY TALE

Single mum of 2, 32, WLTW someone kind, caring and considerate, for nights in/out and cinema. Ryan from Whitstable, please call again, leave contact details! Box 406670

CLOSE ENCOUNTER

Loving, caring, tactile female, 38, 5'8", blonde hair, blue-eyes, NS, GSOH, likes cinema, bowling, country pubs, nights in/out, seeks male for friendship and LTR. Box 827619

FRIENDSHIP, MAYBE MORE

Social, genuine, honest, single mum, 36, 5ft6, I've got hazel eyes and dark hair, I'm sincere, the cinema, meals out. WLTW sincere, attractive, genuine male. Box 446840

TRY ME

Ashford based woman looking for an honest, friendly, caring, and loving man. I have 2 kids, and enjoy the usual things in life. Box 446895

DON'T LET ME DOWN

Pretty, black female, 38, 5ft4, like football, socialising and cooking, looking to be with a caring male, 38-42, for a LTR. Box 446884

ENTHUSIASM ENCOURAGED!

Really pretty big-busted lady, 39, medium build, 5ft5, lots of energy! Likes the gym, reading, new experiences! seeking a nice man for potential exciting relationship! Box 446724

BLONDE AMBITION

Bubbly, cuddly, blonde single mum, 38, 5'6", likes cars, reading, pubs, cosy nights in, having a laugh, looking for that right male for LTR. Box 905614

ANIME LOVER?

Nurse, 37yrs, 2 kids, 5ft8, blonde hair, blue eyes, likes the gym, cooking, swimming, salsa dancing, looking for a kind, caring, loyal male Box 341557

HAPPINESS, THE GREATEST GIFT...

Shy female, 40, 5ft9, blue eyes, short single mum, medium build, loves going out, wine and dining, holidays; seeking likewise gentleman to be happy with. Box 446763

NO TIES

Lonely, bored, professional Tunbridge Wells Asian lady, 40, WLTW slim, single, solvent, professional white male 40-50 for company, fun, love and laughter. Box 443573

TOO MUCH TO ASK?

Genuine female, 41, 5'3", brunette, brown eyes, medium build, enjoys meals out, music etc, seeks male, 38-42, for romance. Box 153275

ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE

Hello, I'm Nikki, 41yr young, 5ft1, enjoys dining out, cinema and dancing, seeking a male for friendship, possible romance and fun times. Box 444796

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CAN YOU HANDLE ME?

I'm a 42 year old professional lady, long dark hair, brown eyes, petite with a wacky SOH. Looking for friends to chill with, then who knows? Box 884411

BORN TO MAKE YOU HAPPY

Caring lovable lady, 42, genuine, short brown hair, lacks confidence seeking loyal, genuine person, someone special to put the spark back into my life. Box 885761

LET'S CLICK

WLTW a nice guy with a similar nature: I'm an outgoing woman, 42, with brown hair and green eyes. Tell me about you! Box 446847

FAST LOVE

Single lady, 43, likes gardening, eating out, cinema, music and more, seeking male for friendship and maybe more. Box 446991

LET'S SEE WHAT HAPPENS

Laid-back single mum, very bubbly, outgoing and intelligent, 43, enjoys social life, drinks, meals, cinema; looking to start afresh with someone new, easygoing and life-loving. Box 446102

YOU NEVER KNOW

Kind, loving and caring mum, 43, 5ft5, round but cuddly! Just looking for someone to share my life with...how about you? S. Leonard-on-Sea. Box 446457

GENUINE REPLIES ONLY

Bubbly female, 44, brunette, NS, medium/large build, enjoys singing and theatre. Would love to meet a decent fun-loving guy, similar age, pref non-smoker for LTR. Box 445955

LOVING, CARING & HONEST

Hard working single mum, young 44yr old, 5ft5, medium build, enjoys dining out, holidays, cinema and walks. WLTW a caring and genuine male for friendship/relationship. Box 444751

JUST IMAGINE

Pettie, brunette, bubbly, friendly, easy-going single mum, 49, enjoys cinema, eating out, socialising, most things. WLTW genuine male, to see where life takes us! Box 835652

HELP!

Positive, vivacious female, 59, 5ft4, enjoys art, seaside walks and music, seeks tallish, kind, caring male to grow old with...disgracefully! Box 144943

I HAVE A DREAM

Bubbly, bubbly curvy female, 59, looks younger, fun to be with, honest, seeks caring male to be the soul-mate. Box 841851

WALKS ALONG THE COAST

Honest & sincere female, 58, tall, GSOH, loves country pubs, coasts, cinema, seeking a man who's a match for me with GSOH for relationship. Box 441622

HERE WE ARE

Easygoing female, 45, self-employed hairdresser, likes theatre, restaurants, socialising, sofa cuddles, seeking loyal, loving, caring male for good times and more. Box 444672

SOULMATE SOUGHT

African descent female, 45, 5ft6, tall figure, radiant, happy, attractive, loves music, theatre, travel, the arts. WLTW gentleman who is cultured, kind, solvent and fun. Box 443998

MAKE ME LAUGH!

Fun extrovert person, 45, likes cinema, going out, meals, socialising, 5ft7, dark brown hair/eyes, curvy, seeking nice guy to start off as friends with. Box 444067

EVERLASTING LOVE

Beautiful black female, 46, WLTW a caring, gentle and loving gentleman, 45-60, 5ft10+, pref a bit sporty, for a everlasting relationship. Tunbridge Wells. Box 445407

IT'S WHAT YOU MAKE OF IT!

44yr old female, blonde hair, 5ft5, slim, easygoing, enjoys many things in life, looking for someone similar there to enjoy life with! Box 436810

HAPPY GO LUCKY

Sincere, happy woman, with GSOH. I'm 5ft6, with short brown hair, brown eyes. I have lots of interests and WLTW similar guy. Box 885019

ARE YOU THE ONE FOR ME?

Caring, cute female, 46, petite, likes socialising, dancing, travelling, good food, seeking intelligent, loyal man 42-52 for love and TLC. Seaford. Box 444068

STIMULATING COMPANY

Bubbly, caring, single mum, 46, WLTW nice male, for good conversations, cinema, and maybe more. Box 398923

ENTERTAIN ME

40yo female, medium build, blonde, cute short, seeking tall, confident, sensual guy for regular winging, dining, loving and laughter, honest, genuine and loving. Box 438554

LAUGHTER, THE BEST MEDICINE

Help me write my stand-up comedy routine! I'm 49, you'll need to make me laugh out loud and understand observational comedy to make the grade. Box 892640

JUST IMAGINE

Pettie, brunette, bubbly, friendly, easy-going single mum, 49, enjoys cinema, eating out, socialising, most things. WLTW genuine male, to see where life takes us! Box 835652

SO PHISTICATED GUY

Sue, 50yr old, 5ft4, green eyes, petite, loves cooking, holidays, reading and swimming, WLTW a tall professional male, similar age, for friendship and romance. Box 443309

NO SHALLOWNESS

Intelligent lady, 55, 5ft8, large build, looking for a nice, genuine male who enjoys theatre, meals, laughter, music, relaxing and good conversation. Box 444145

EXTRA! EXTRA!

African lady, 58, likes reading, current affairs and travelling, WLTW an outgoing, fun-loving and honest male to share the rest of my life with. Box 451222

LIFE IS FOR LIVING

Stylish and sophisticated woman, 56, young outlook on life, curvy but slim, confident and outgoing, loves holidays abroad, seeks a gentleman, 50-59, for romance. Box 447475

FANCY A RIDE?

Affectionate tactile bubbly woman, young 56, 5'7", blonde, curvy, looking for lasting relationship with 50-58 year old loving man. Box 888680

HAND IN HAND, HEART TO HEART

Open-minded lady, 58, seeking male 58-63, enjoying, loving, eating out, gardening, foreign holidays and more. Box 446468

HELP!

Positive, vivacious female, 59, 5ft4, enjoys art, seaside walks and music, seeks tallish, kind, caring male to grow old with...disgracefully! Box 144943

I HAVE A DREAM

Bubbly, bubbly curvy female, 59, looks younger, fun to be with, honest, seeks caring male to be the soul-mate. Box 841851

WALKS ALONG THE COAST

Honest & sincere female, 58, tall, GSOH, loves country pubs, coasts, cinema, seeking a man who's a match for me with GSOH for relationship. Box 441622

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SO PHISTICATED GUY

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MEN seeking women

HAVE MUCH TO OFFER

23yr old guy, 6ft, medium build, dark blond hair and blue eyes, enjoys pubs, cinema, walks, keeping fit, seeking like-minded girl for friendship and more. Box 893423

FOR LOVE

Hard-working male, 29, 5ft10, dark hair, brown eyes, medium build, plays harder! likes going/leaving out, walks, pubs, loves life, seeking similar happy, trustworthy lady. Box 447252

THE SERIOUS KIND

Good-looking male, 31, dark complexion, 5ft6, looking for a woman for a relationship, possible leading to marriage. Box 447403

WISHLIST YOURS

My name is Mick, I'm 34 years old, single, 5ft

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- PUBLIC SECTOR, SOCIAL SERVICES
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- TRANSPORT, LOGISTICS, AVIATION

Senior & General Appointments 31-34

Public Notices 33

Care home situated in **Maidstone** is looking for the following staff:-

COOK for the weekends, hours 7pm-3pm

KITCHEN ASSISTANTS to include weekends, hours 11pm-6pm

DOMESTIC needed Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, 6 hours per day - flexible

HANDYPERSON, 25 hours per week

For more details and informal discussion please contact Belinda on 01622 737847.

We require part time or full time

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for Ashford and the Marsh

Applicants must have their own vehicle

We offer flexible shifts, which include mornings, evenings and weekends

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Please call 01797 361889

E.mail countryfolkcare@hotmail.co.uk

Fax No. 01797 367493

Loring Hall 

We look after people with Learning Difficulties and who may have challenging behaviours. We are currently recruiting for the following

- Senior Support Workers
- Support Workers
- Waking NightStaff
- Handyman/Driver

If you have a passion for the role and the experience, call John Parker now! CRB checks necessary

Tel: 020 8302 9302 Email: loring@oakfields.net

DO YOU WANT TO MAKE SOMEONE'S DAY?

The Kent Registration Service is looking for Registrar/Celebrants. To find out more visit www.kent.gov.uk/jobs



To advertise in this section

 **01303 817040**

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Would you like to join our concept creative team?

We are looking for creative thinkers who can develop copy and concept ideas through to on-screen design. Ideally you will be able to illustrate/scamp out a full brief and idea for potential advertisers and liaise with our other graphic designers or even turn it into a finished on-screen advert.

It will be an advantage to have a good background in copy writing, headlines and marketing skills as well as the ability to understand call-to-action and unique tagline messages. Knowledge of QuarkXPress, Photoshop, Illustrator or Indesign would also be an advantage.

All applicants should include an illustration/scamp of any advert from any local paper, illustrating how this advert could stand out or be portrayed in a way that talks more to its potential consumer than the original advert in the local paper.

We have been recognised nationally for award winning advertising campaigns for our clients, so if you want to be a part of our dynamic creative team in print or online, please send in your CV with a covering letter and your illustration/scamp advert idea to: Paul Stannard, Managing Director, KOS Media, Apple Barn, Hythe Road, Smeeth, Ashford, Kent TN25 6SR or email paul.stannard@kosmedia.co.uk



Award Winning Company

Visitor Services and Events Supervisor

£17,465 (£14,161 pro-rata) and benefits
Bedgebury, Kent

Supervising the Visitor Services Team in providing a first class service to the public, you'll demonstrate clear leadership skills, displaying flexibility in sometimes demanding situations. You'll support the Visitor Services and Events Manager in providing an events programme that fulfils the business objectives at Bedgebury. Experience in the delivery of the highest level of customer care is essential and experience of working in the recreation and/or tourism industry would be beneficial. **Please quote ref: HR89/146.**

Visitor Services Assistant/Handyperson

£15,243 (£12,359 pro-rata) and benefits
Bedgebury, Kent

You'll assist the Visitor Services team in providing a first class service to the public, which will include general repairs and maintenance. You'll also assist with a variety of work including health and safety inspections, routine maintenance, the delivery of events and a variety of other tasks essential to the efficient running of this popular visitor attraction. Experience of working with the public is also required. Hour split will be two days per week on Visitor Services work and two days per week on Handyperson work.

Please quote ref: HR89/145.

For both posts, you'll be IT competent, and hours are 30 nett rostered over a seven day period working alternate weekends and some evenings

Benefits include a Civil Service Pension or stakeholder pension scheme, 25 days annual leave and flexible working options.

To apply visit our website at the address below or write to Shireen West, HR Services, 231 Corstorphine Road, Edinburgh EH12 7AT. Please note all applications must be accompanied by a Forestry Commission application form.

Please quote appropriate reference.

No recruitment agencies please.

Closing date: 19 January 2009.

The Forestry Commission is committed to equality of opportunity and welcomes applications from all age groups and sectors of the community.



Forestry Commission
England

www.forestry.gov.uk/vacancies

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Individual Needs Tutor
Infant & Junior Department

Salary Scale £19,060 - £19,976
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0.4 fte - ability to be flexible desirable

1:1 tuition

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Applications, with full CV's, a letter of introduction and details of two referees should be sent to:

The Headmaster, Dover College, Effingham Crescent,
Dover, Kent. CT17 9RH

Closing Date for Applications 9th January 2009

Tel: 01304 205969 ext. 201

Email: headmaster@dovercollege.org.uk or
hm.pa@dovercollege.org.uk www.dovercollege.org.uk

Dover College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.
Dover College: Registered Charity Number 307856

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Are you looking to start a new career or even embark on a career change, if so this could be your opportunity.

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Candidates wishing to apply should write or e-mail enclosing full CV with contact details to:

Oliver Blake - Area Director
Your Move, 93 Commercial Road
Paddock Wood, Kent TN12 6DS
E-mail Oliver.blake2@your-move.co.uk

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**SPEECH AND LANGUAGE
THERAPIST**

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Medway Scale, Grade B1 £22,664 - £29,628 (pro rata)

Are you committed, motivated and enthusiastic? Does 'Every Child Matter' to you? Can you provide an exceptional Speech and Language therapy service within an educational setting? Are you an effective team member with a professional, flexible approach and a good sense of humour?

If so, you could be the 'SALT' that we are looking for.

Abbey Court is located on 2 sites: Rainham (Primary) and Strood (Secondary and Further Education), and caters for pupils aged 4-19 with severe learning difficulties. Working hours are 37 hours p.w. term time only. Candidates should hold a relevant Speech and Language Therapy degree/qualification.

This School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Any offer of appointment for post is subject to a satisfactory Criminal Record Bureau Disclosure.

For an application pack, please write to/telephone (stating the role for which you are applying):
Mrs Linda Taylor, Abbey Court School, Rede Court Road,
Strood, Kent. ME2 3SP (01634 338224)

Please note CV's will not be accepted.

Closing date: 23.1.2009

Career Opportunities



Canterbury College is an equal opportunities employer

Canterbury College is a Further and Higher Education College in the heart of Kent. Our goal is to be one of the best FE Colleges in England by 2010. We have 9,000 students across 300 courses and enjoy an enviable reputation as a great place to learn. Our brand new £50M campus is also home to nearly 800 staff and we have some great career opportunities which may be right for you.

Section Manager Construction Craft	08/12
37 hrs per week, salary starting £33,858 per annum	
Section Manager Dental Nursing, Social Care and Counselling	06/110
37 hrs per week, salary starting £33,858 per annum	
Coordinator Mathematics	08/61
37 hrs per week, salary starting £27,209 per annum	
Lecturer Media in Interactive Media	04/64
18.5 hrs per week salary range £18,387 – £26,363 pro rata per annum	
Pre 16 Tutor	07/12
37 hrs per week salary range £18,387 – £26,363 per annum Fixed term post ending 31 August 2010	
Lecturer Computing and IT	L24
37 hrs per week salary range £18,387 – £26,363 per annum. Fixed term post ending 31 December 2012	
Lecturer Public Services	06/92 & 08/145
2 x posts - 37 hrs per week salary range £18,387 – £26,363 per annum.	
Supply Lecturers to teach Learning Support and Teaching Assistants	SI/HE/LS
Various hours available, salary range £18,387 – £26,363 pro rata per annum	

Skills for Life Initial Assessor	08/154
18.5 hours per week, salary starting £15,085 pro rata per annum	

For an information pack please visit www.canterburycollege.ac.uk or call the Human Resources Office on 01227 811282 (24 hr answerphone) quoting the above reference.

Staff benefits include:

- Pension & Life Assurance Scheme
- Sports Hall & Gym
- Proximity to main bus & train stations
- Generous Holiday Allowance
- Close to City Centre
- Staff Discount Scheme

The closing date for the above posts is Monday 12 January 2009 at 12 noon

CLICK
www.canterburycollege.ac.uk/job-vacancies

CALL
01227 811282 (24 hr answerphone)



Career Opportunities



Sheppey College is an equal opportunities employer

Sheppey College is a satellite of Canterbury College and has been open since 1996. We offer a variety of courses in a modern and friendly learning environment and enjoy excellent rates of success.

Supply Learning Support staff required in the following areas: Ref SH/LS

- Beauty
- Hair
- Cache
- Skills for Working Life
- Administration
- Finance
- ICT
- Public Services
- Construction

Various hours available, salary starting £16,914 pro rata per annum

For an information pack please visit www.canterburycollege.ac.uk or call the Human Resources Office on 01227 811282 (24 hr answerphone) quoting the above reference.

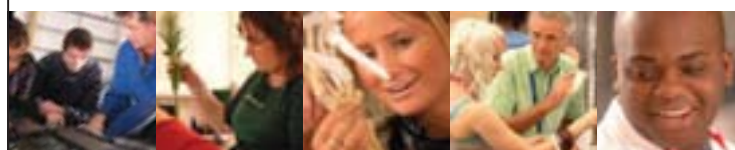
Staff benefits include:

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- Proximity to main bus & train stations
- Close to Town Centre

The closing date for the above posts is Monday 12th January 2009 at 12 noon.

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MidKent College

MidKent College based in the Medway Towns and Maidstone is seeking to appoint outstanding individuals in the following areas:

Assistant Graphic Designer

Salary: £19,736 - £25,441

You will assist the College's graphic designer with all aspects relating to the production and development of the College's design requirements, including prospectuses, brochures, leaflets, advertisements and corporate documents. The successful candidate will have knowledge and experience of working in a graphic design related role and be able to demonstrate excellent creativity and design skills. A sound working knowledge of Mac OS X, QuarkXPress, Photoshop, Freehand MX and Microsoft Office is also required. Knowledge and experience of multi-media design and production would be advantageous.

Lecturer in Hair Design

(22.2 hours per week) Salary: £25,092 - £28,719 pro rata

We are seeking to appoint an enthusiastic professional to teach, assess and contribute to the development of Hair Design programmes. The successful candidate will develop and deliver high quality training and assessment procedures to full and part-time learners. The applicant must have a relevant vocational/academic qualification and should hold or be willing to work towards a teaching qualification. Recent industry experience would be advantageous.

Lecturer in Beauty

(18.5 hours per week) Salary: £25,092 - £28,719 pro rata

We are seeking to appoint a passionate individual to teach, assess and contribute to the development of Beauty Therapy programmes. The successful candidate will develop and deliver high quality training and assessment procedures to full and part-time learners. The applicant must have a relevant vocational/academic qualification and should hold or be willing to work towards a teaching qualification. Recent industry experience would be advantageous.

Floristry Technician

(37 hours per week Term Time - 38 weeks) Salary: £11,599 - £17,200 pro-rata

We have an exciting opportunity for a Floristry Technician who will be responsible for providing assistance and technical support to staff and learners within the Floristry department. In addition, you will prepare equipment for lessons and place and receive orders and ensure equipment is maintained. Ideally, you will have experience in the field of Floristry and be able to demonstrate good administrative skills. Candidates who submitted an application for this post in October 2008 need not re-apply.

Aim-Higher Co-ordinator

(Maternity Cover - 30 hours per week, term-time) Salary: £17,861 - £22,907 pro-rata

The successful candidate will arrange, develop and deliver activities which will increase aspiration and awareness of opportunities in Higher Education and progression routes amongst learners currently enrolled at MidKent College and to lead in the support offered to learners with their applications into HE through the UCAS process.

Closing date: Friday, 23 January 2009

Mid-Kent College is working in partnership with RBL Employment Solutions to support individuals who have a disability or health condition in the application, interview and employment with the college. If you would like any further information regarding RBL, or require assistance with your application process then please contact RBL on 0800 783 1144 or visit their website www.rbl.co.uk for information, advice and guidance.

The College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people and vulnerable adults and anyone applying for work with the College is expected to share this commitment. Any offer of employment is subject to an Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure.

Application forms and further details are available from www.midkent.ac.uk. Alternatively, please e-mail job.applications@midkent.ac.uk. For individuals without access to e-mail or the internet please call the Personnel department on 01634 884402 (24 hour answer machine). In all communication with the College please quote the appropriate job title and reference number.

Mid-Kent College is an equal opportunities employer



Unqualified Tutors

Grade £15,113 - £23,903

37 hours per week

Attendance & Behaviour Service
Project 15, Thanet

This is an innovative alternative curriculum project for disengaged and disaffected KS4 students, involving an engaging and broad curriculum, a new slant on curriculum delivery.

Committed to high quality and genuinely imaginative education, Project 15 is looking for an additional Unqualified Tutor to join this well established, exciting venture.

Applicants for the post will have to provide evidence of effective working with disengaged KS4 students and have a proven commitment to teaching, learning and curriculum innovation.

For an informal discussion about the posts, please call Micheala Clay on 01843 231758.

Ref: CFE/o8/0652

Children, Families & Education, 3 year contract,
Tonbridge ARC

The Adolescent Resource Centre (ARC) in Tonbridge is a well established and successful multi-agency provision for young people in the area. Education and Children's Social Services staff lead the project and work with staff from other children's services agencies to provide well rounded support.

Applicants for the post will be able to provide evidence of the ability to work effectively with disaffected young people in Alternative Curriculum education settings. They will also have a recognised teaching qualification or be willing to undertake one in the first year of employment and have a good understanding of the contribution that education can make to ECM outcomes.

For an informal discussion about the post phone Anne Lowry on 07934 508100.

Ref: CFE/o8/0650

Both posts are subject to an Enhanced Disclosure Application to the Criminal Records Bureau.

To apply visit www.kent.gov.uk, email recruitment.line@kent.gov.uk, or telephone 08458 247 904 or minicom 08458 247 905 (charged at local rate). Please quote relevant reference number.

Closing date for both posts: 15 January 2009.

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PUBLIC NOTICES

The Insolvency Act 1986
G M BARNARD LIMITED
(Company No: 05248881)

Notice is hereby given, in pursuance of Section 98 of the Insolvency Act 1986, that a Meeting of Creditors of the above named Company will be held at Gerald Edelman Business Recovery, Gateway House, Highpoint Business Village, Henwood, Ashford, Kent, TN24 8BH, not later than 12.00 noon on Monday 19th January 2009. For the purposes of the said Act, to receive a statement of the Company's affairs, to nominate one or more Insolvency Practitioners as Liquidators, and to consider the appointment of a Liquidation Committee. If a Liquidation Committee is not formed, the Meeting may be asked to consider other Resolutions, including the basis upon which the Liquidator's fee is to be remunerated, and for the approval of the costs of preparing the statement of affairs and convening the Meetings. Creditors wishing to vote at the Meeting must lodge a form of Proxy, together with a full statement of account, at the Registered Office of the Company, c/o Gerald Edelman Business Recovery, Gateway House, Highpoint Business Village, Henwood, Ashford, Kent, TN24 8BH, not later than 12.00 noon on Monday 19th January 2009. For the purposes of voting, a Secured Creditor is required, unless he surrenders his security, to lodge at the Registered Office of the Company as above, before the meeting, a statement giving full particulars of his security, the date when it was given, and the value at which it is assessed. Notice is further given that a list of the names and addresses of the Company's creditors may be inspected, free of charge at, Gerald Edelman Business Recovery at Gateway House, Highpoint Business Village, Henwood, Ashford, Kent TN24 8BH between the hours of 10.00 am and 4.00 pm on the two business days preceding the date of the meeting stated above. Dated: 15 December 2008 By Order of the Board Michael Barnard, Director

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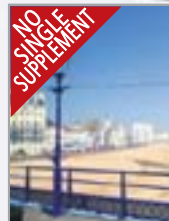
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**MYSTERY TOUR 23 Jan,
20 Feb & 20 Mar – 3 days**
For those with a sense of adventure our Mystery Tours offer the perfect combination; a surprise destination, places of interest & a sense of camaraderie amongst fellow passengers as you try to guess your final destination. Book early as our Mystery Tours are very popular! 4* hotel (HB) & mystery excursions#.



£149pp*

**BOURNEMOUTH
26 Jan & 23 Feb – 5 days**
Just the thing to cheer you up after the festive season. Enjoy wonderful food, great places to visit & lots going on – and all for an amazing price! Ideally located to the sea front – 3* Bay View Court Hotel (HB) – 26 Jan / Ocean View Hotel – 12 Jan & 23 Feb (HB) entertainment, leisure facilities & 2 full day excursions.



£99pp*

**EASTBOURNE
30 Jan – 3 days**
Eastbourne enjoys a glorious location, tucked under the rolling South Downs & the impressive Beachy Head. You'll have time to explore the town, take a stroll along the pretty seafront or admire the recently restored Victorian pier. Includes the 3* Chatsworth Hotel (HB), glass of wine on arrival & full day trip to Lewes.



£129pp*

**TORQUAY
6 Feb – 4 days**
Situated in the heart of the English Riviera a stylish resort combining modern facilities with the elegance of time gone by. The town is overflowing with vitality and places of interest. Why not enjoy a stroll along the Palm lined promenades giving a Mediterranean feel to your stay. Includes 3* Overmead Hotel (HB), complimentary taxi service to & from town.



fr £249pp**

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16 Feb – 4 days**
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£139pp*

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ARE FOREVER!
27 Feb – 3 days**
Antwerp, the diamond capital of the world, has long been a key trading place & port for Belgium. It offers a fantastic mixture of culture along with great shopping, cobbled streets & excellent restaurants. Beware the many chocolate shops will tempt even the most strong-willed! 4* Plaza Hotel in central Antwerp (BB).



£99pp*

**WORTHING
27 Feb – 3 days**
Situated between the beautiful South Downs & 5 miles of award winning coastline. The town offers superb theatres, friendly restaurants & fabulous shopping. Oscar Wilde found it such a 'charming town' & wrote 'The Importance of Being Earnest' whilst staying here. Close by is the outstanding countryside of East & West Sussex. Includes 3* Chatsworth Hotel (HB) & 1 full day excursion.



£199pp*

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WEEK", 2 Mar – 5 days**
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**AMSTERDAM
6 Mar – 4 days**
An action packed city built around a spider's web of picturesque canals. Amsterdam offers world class museums, lively bars & enticing shops. Includes a 1/2 day Volendam trip, a pretty harbour town where ladies still wear traditional costumes. 4* hotel (BB), Amsterdam orientation & 1/2 day excursion.

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Date	Destination	Price (Adult pp)^
Wed 14	London Museums	£15
Sat 17	Cirque Du Soleil "Quidam"	£85
Sat 17	Holiday On Ice Brighton "Mystery"	£39
Sun 18	Holiday On Ice Brighton "Mystery"	£39
Sun 18	Bruges or Sluis	£30
Wed 21	Holiday On Ice Brighton "Mystery"	£39
Thu 22	The Musical Museum With Lunch New	£29
Sat 24	Holiday On Ice Brighton "Mystery"	£39
Sun 25	Holiday On Ice Brighton "Mystery"	£39
Sun 25	London Eye, Lunch & River Cruise	£59
Mon 26	Monday Special – Ypres & St Flora	£20
Tue 27	Pussycat Dolls At The O2 Arena	£59
Wed 28	Mystery Day With Lunch	£20
Sat 31	Holiday On Ice Brighton "Mystery"	£39

FEBRUARY

Date	Destination	Price (Adult pp)^
Sun 1	Holiday On Ice Brighton "Mystery"	£39
Thu 5	Greenwich Maritime Museum New	£15
Sat 7	London Showtime	fr £54
Mon 9	Monday Special – Ostend & St Flora	£20
Wed 11	Lunch At Moulin Snick, St Omer	£40
Thu 12	Raf Museum London New	£15
Sat 14	Valentines Love Is In The Air – London Eye & Chocolates	£39
Sun 15	London Eye, Lunch & River Cruise	£59
Tue 17	London Zoo	£29
Wed 18	Kew Gardens Tropical Plants 250th Anniversary	£30
Thu 19	Boulogne & Hypermarket	£25
Sat 21	Disneyland® Resort Paris	£65
Tue 24	Imperial War Museum & Ian Fleming Exhibition (James Bond)	£25
Wed 25	Sound Of Music	£49
Thu 26	Mystery Day	£15
Sat 28	Lakeside or Romford Market	£17

MARCH

Date	Destination	Price (Adult pp)^
Mon 2	Monday Special – Ghent	£20
Wed 4	National Gallery & Picasso Exhibition New	£29
Fri 6	Dirty Dancing	£59
Sat 7	The Secret World Of Bletchley Park New	£29
Sun 8	Crufts Dog Show	£40
Tue 10	Paris In Springtime	£40
Wed 11	Lunch At Moulin Snick, St Omer	£40
Thu 12	Milestones Living History Museum New	£25
Sun 15	Bruges or Sluis	£30
Tue 17	Windsor Lunch Cruise New	£35
Thu 19	Wisley Gardens At Springtime	£25
Sat 21	London Showtime	fr £54
Sat 21	Hampton Court Floramania New	£30
Sun 22	London Eye, Lunch & River Cruise Mothers Day	£59
Sun 22	Classical Spectacular with lunch	£83
Tue 24	Arras	£25
Wed 25	Kew Gardens At Springtime 250th Anniversary	£30
Thu 26	Ideal Home Show	£30
Sat 28	Disney Live – Mickey's Magic Show New	£39
Sat 28	Ideal Home Show	£30
Sun 29	Ideal Home Show	£30
Sun 29	Bruges or Sluis	£30
Tue 31	Thames Lunch Cruise & London New	£40

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BUSINESS BRIEFS

Westwood's admirers vote with their feet

SHOPPERS have given Westwood Cross a vote of confidence in the latest survey by Business Blueprints.

Research reveals that 99 per cent of shoppers rate cleanliness at the retail centre as good or very good, 95 per cent feel the centre is safe and secure and 94 per cent value the pleasant atmosphere.

And despite worries about the economy, shoppers are spending eight per cent more this year on non-food items than last spring.

The centre is also attracting more shoppers from farther afield, in particular from Canterbury and Whitstable.

Of Thanet shoppers, 16 per cent said they also visited Bluewater, compared with 61 per cent last year.

Marketing manager Tracie Stevens said the centre was making an increasing contribution to the local economy.

Art meets commerce

A COLLABORATION between the arts and business has taken off at West Malling's Kings Hill business park.

It entails the launch of works by south east artists in the site's office buildings.

New works will be shown every three months, preceded by a private viewing when people from the wider business community will be able to see them.

Caroline Binns, of developer Liberty Property Trust UK, said: "The aim is to brighten people's working day by creating a welcoming and stimulating environment."

Liberty founded the Rouse Kent Public Art Award with KCC for the best piece of public art in the county. The biennial award will be held this year.

Channel trade seminar

NEWCRÉATIF, a virtual design and communication agency based in Folkestone and Canterbury, held another seminar on design and communication issues for firms trading in France.

The seminar, at the Ramada Hotel, Dover, was attended by more than 25 local government and businesses delegates from both sides of the Channel.

It is one of a series of events organised by Transmanche Technology over the last 18 months. All are aimed at improving trade between companies based in Kent and northern France.



CHEER UP: Despite the impact of the credit crunch Kent is well positioned to take advantage of the recovery and many county firms are still performing well

Our glass is half full

■ BY TONY PATEY

EVEN economic downturns have their silent majorities – more than half of companies in Kent say they are either unaffected by the current slowdown or are performing well and growing.

And a fifth are confident of a recovery in the coming months. This is proof that, while it's the public duty of the media to report what is going on, there is always another side of the coin that needs polishing.

The Financial and Business Services Survey 2008 commissioned by investment promotion agency Locate in Kent shows that almost a quarter of companies feel prospects are better for being based in Kent rather than elsewhere in the UK.

When asked how the economic climate was impacting on their business, encouragingly, almost a third – 29 per cent – reported that

they were still performing well and growing.

Just under half of respondents felt that their businesses had suffered as a result of economic downturn, and a further quarter responded that it had no impact.

Companies in the business services sector seemed to be faring better in this economic climate, with 36 per cent performing well, compared with 22 per cent in the financial sector.

The majority of respondents were realistic about the potential consequences of the global economic crisis, with 57 per cent concerned about their business over the next two years.

However, almost a third of respondents were confident their business would grow over the next few years.

One in five respondents felt confident about a recovery in the coming months.

When asked the biggest issue that compa-

nies would face once the economic outlook improved, respondents cited fears of cash flow problems and the cost of finance, lack of client and consumer confidence, red tape and legislation and the possibility of a slow recovery in the housing market.

Paul Wookey, chief executive of Locate in Kent, said: "These results are not surprising given that we cannot get away from the hard economic truths we are facing."

"However, there are some very encouraging results from this report. The fact that Kent's location and solid transport links were so positively rated gives us good reason to be optimistic about the future."

"The improved links to central London will serve the county well as it looks to leverage opportunities such as the 2012 Olympics."

"Access to international markets will become an essential lifeline for a number of companies, underlining the importance of transport links in terms of business location choice."

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Gills hard done by in brave cup effort

Picture: KEITH SLATER



CUP JOY: Gills celebrate with their fans after Simeon Jackson's equaliser in Sunday's FA Cup tie against Aston Villa

Gillingham 1 Aston Villa 2

FOR 77 minutes on Sunday the romance of the FA Cup was alive and well at Priestfield as Gillingham looked to be heading for a lucrative replay at Villa Park.

Their endeavour was undone by two flashes of Premier League class which resulted in goals for James Milner to render Simeon Jackson's superb strike meaningless.

The first came after just 14 minutes, when stand-in skipper Adam Miller was dispossessed cheaply. Milner combined with Stiliyan Petrov to carve open the Gills defence and fire first time past Simon Royce.

In an instant the buoyant atmos-

FOOTBALL

phere around a packed Priestfield vanished as the home fans feared a thrashing. Instead the opposite happened and Gills began to control the game.

Dennis Oli shot into the side netting and only a perfectly timed tackle from Zat Knight prevented Jackson from a clear run on Brad Friedel's goal.

Just before the hour mark the pressure was finally converted into something tangible. A long kick from Royce was flicked on by Gary Mulligan and Jackson showed great strength and pace to turn and sprint away from Knight

before smashing a shot past Friedel.

It was no less than the League Two side deserved and Priestfield exploded in a mixture of joy and relief.

The more optimistic among the home faithful might have started to dream of going on to win the tie outright, but being pegged back roused Villa. With Gills attempting to defend in search of a replay the Premier League side seized the initiative.

They struggled to create a clear opening until Ashley Young fell under pressure from Miller and won a penalty 13 minutes from time. Replays showed it was a soft but not incorrect decision and Milner found the corner to ease Villa through to end Gills' brave resistance.

Rugby team raring to go after winter break

MEDWAY RFC will hope the three-week winter break has done little to halt their momentum when league fixtures resume this weekend.

Taff Gwilliam's side were in irresistible form in the first half of the season. Following an opening day defeat they won their next 14 games in all competitions.

The sequence has taken them four points clear at the top of Kent 1, fuelling hopes of an unprecedented third successive promotion.

On Saturday they will be looking to extend the winning run as they welcome mid-table Ashford to Priestfields.

Just one point separated the teams in the reverse fixture, with Medway winning 20-19.

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Villa boss Martin O'Neill says he would have been happy with FA Cup replay against Gills

Luqa who wrapped up title victory early

LUQA FC are the champions of the City Masters Sunday Super League with three weeks of the competition left.

A 4-1 victory against Amsco wrapped up the title as Luqa are eight points clear with only six points left to play for. The runners-up spot is still up for grabs with a host of teams vying for the position.

In the Friday City League, leaders Santos FC extended their lead at the top with a 1-0 victory against second-placed Team X. Sparkies are just behind Team X on goal difference following their 5-1 thrashing of Piggies.

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DAVID AND GOLIATH: Mark Stimson and Martin O'Neill shake hands before kick-off, while Dennis Oli gives Nicky Shore problems during Sunday's FA Cup tie



Pictures: KEITH SLATER

I'd have settled for a replay at Villa Park, admits O'Neill

FOOTBALL

■ BY DAVID PRITCHARD

IN THE build-up to Sunday's FA Cup tie, Gillingham manager Mark Stimson feared Aston Villa would run up a cricket score, but the Premier League side finished the game by wasting time in the corner flag.

The delaying tactic was a measure of the League Two side's performance, as a strong Villa side were pushed all the way in an old-fashioned cup tie.

A late disputed penalty from James Milner proved the difference and Villa boss Martin O'Neill admitted before the spot-kick was awarded, he would have happily taken a draw.

He said: "It was a very difficult afternoon. We got a great goal but I never felt comfortable, I thought Gillingham were always in the game. They equalised and the game was in the balance, it was a genuine FA Cup tie. Before we

got the penalty I would have settled going back to Villa Park [for a replay]."

Stand-in Gillingham captain Adam Miller was angry with the penalty decision, which was prompted by a challenge from him on Ashley Young. It turned out to be the game's crucial decision, as Villa scraped through to the fourth round.

"It was soft," Miller said. "As [Young] took it past me I knew I wasn't going to get the ball but because he took a slightly heavy touch he wasn't going to get it either. I've put my hands up, there was no aggression, it wasn't even a challenge."

A mixture of suspensions, injuries and unavailability robbed Stimson of four first team players for the game. The paucity of

options in his threadbare squad was shown by his substitutes' bench, where he named six teenagers.

His pre-match comments about potentially losing 7-0 may well have been an attempt to take the pressure off his makeshift side rather than what he actually believed. But he paid tribute to the way they largely contained a team with realistic ambitions of finishing above Arsenal in the Premier League this season.

He said: "I'm proud of the players first and foremost. I thought they went out there against a very strong Aston Villa side and gave a good account of themselves."

"I'm frustrated with the result because I thought we were that close to getting a draw and going back to Villa Park."

"Overall the performance was very encouraging. We have got to make sure we take this performance into our next six to eight league games. If we do it would set up February and March really nicely."

Chats made to pay for slow start to New Year

FOOTBALL

BY DAVID PRITCHARD

Tilbury 2

Burrell 4, Kamara 27

Chatham Town 0

CHATHAM Town were unable to take their winning run into the New Year as a slow start cost them any chance of taking something from their game at Tilbury on Saturday.

The Chats strung back-to-back wins together for the first time this season over the Christmas period, but were punished as they fell behind early on. A stunning strike from Rashid Kamara doubled their lead and despite controlling much of the final hour, Town came away empty handed.

Chats boss Steve Binks was unhappy with the performance and felt he needed to be tougher on his squad.

He said: "As well as we played in the first 15 minutes last week, we were so sloppy and it cost us the game. We sat off them, didn't close the ball down. We played well at times and kept the ball well but we lacked a cutting edge again.

"It was frustrating. I was singing their praises before kick-off about how well we had been

Chatham starting XI



Subs used: Scott (Potter 20), Farrell (Austin 55), Best (O'Brien 60) playing. I think I need to bully them a bit more."

The visitors had two excellent chances to find a way back into the game, but were unable to take them. First Simon Austin nicked the ball away from the goalkeeper but instead of squaring to the unmarked Matt Solly for an easy tap-in, the striker was greedy and went himself, only to lose the ball.

Lee Barnett, who scored both goals in the 2-0 win against Thamesmead Town a week earlier, then hit the post.

The game was goalkeeper Martin Grant's last as his loan deal is due to expire. With Dan Ellis serving a lengthy ban after being sent off for the reserves, Binks will attempt to extend the loan for another month this week.

Midfielder Dave Botterill has dropped down a division to Faversham Town in search of a regular place in his preferred central midfield role. With Solly and Alex O'Brien performing well in the middle, Botterill has predominantly been deployed wide on the left.

Elsewhere, striker Rob Denness is set to turn down an approach from Folkestone Invicta.

Chats are next in action this Saturday at home to Cheshunt.



DEPARTURE: Dave Botterill (left) has left Chatham to sign for Faversham Town

FOOTBALL



INTEREST: Gills boss wants to keep hold of striker Simeon Jackson until the end of the season

Stimson confident Jackson will stay

GILLINGHAM manager Mark Stimson believes he will be able to hang on to striker Simeon Jackson until the end of the season despite interest from other clubs.

The 21-year-old scored his 12th goal of the season against Aston Villa on Sunday and has been linked with a move up two divisions to Ipswich Town.

Stimson last month declared he would not sell his top scorer for £1 million. The Gills boss conceded he could be in for a fight at the end of the season if Jackson continues his form, but is confident he will not even receive any bids during the January transfer window.

"I've had no offers yet," he said. "Managers talk to each other and Jacko's name has come up once or twice.

"I think they will look to the summer, teams will see he's done fantastically well for the first half of the season, first time in the Football League, and see how he develops.

"If he does the same and finishes with 24 goals then I think someone will take a gamble. He's desperate to play at a higher level, he will one day but hopefully not in the near future.

"We want to win promotion this year and again the following year and the only way we're going to do that is by keeping players of that quality. I will be doing my utmost to be saying no to any bids but at the end of the day it's always down to the chairman."

Rather than losing players during the window, Stimson will speak to club chairman Paul Scally this week outlining his targets. He is hoping to get a slice of the estimated £300,000 the club made from the FA Cup clash with Aston Villa and is looking to bring in two new players.

He said: "We do need cover, we need to possibly bring in another centre-half and centre-forward if we are going to go for those three automatic promotion places or the play-offs. We will see in the next week or so if the funds are available.

"First and foremost [first-team coach] Mark Robson is the most important one to get on the payroll, that will be my first chat. If we can add those two players and Mark Robson I think we've got a great chance."

COCA-COLA LEAGUE TWO

	P	W	D	L	Gd	Pt
1 Wycombe Wanderers	24	13	10	1	+49	49
2 Brentford	22	11	8	3	+44	41
3 Bradford City	24	11	7	6	+43	40
4 Dagham & Redbridge	23	11	5	7	+22	38
5 Shrewsbury Town	24	10	8	6	+18	38
6 Darlington	23	10	8	5	+14	38
7 Rochdale	23	10	8	5	+10	38
8 Bury	24	10	6	8	+8	36
9 Exeter City	22	10	6	6	+5	36
10 Gillingham	23	9	7	7	+1	34
11 Aldershot Town	22	10	4	8	-2	34
12 Lincoln City	23	8	6	9	+2	30
13 Chesterfield	23	7	7	9	+2	28
14 Macclesfield Town	23	8	3	12	-18	27
15 Port Vale	23	8	2	13	-13	26
16 Morecambe	23	5	10	8	-9	25
17 Notts County	23	5	9	9	-10	24
18 Chester City	23	6	5	12	-13	23
19 Accrington Stanley	23	6	4	13	-11	22
20 Rotherham United (-17)	23	10	7	6	+7	20
21 Barnet	23	4	7	12	-21	19
22 Grimsby Town	23	2	8	13	-23	14
23 Bournemouth (-17)	24	5	9	10	-10	7
24 Luton Town (-30)	23	7	8	8	-3	-1

RYMAN DIVISION ONE NORTH

	P	W	D	L	Gd	Pt
1 Aveley	23	15	7	1	+28	52
2 Brentwood Town	22	14	5	3	+23	47
3 East Thurrock United	22	15	2	5	+19	47
4 Waltham Abbey	22	14	4	4	+30	46
5 Northwood	24	13	5	6	+13	44
6 Ware	24	14	2	8	+10	44
7 Concord Rangers	24	12	6	6	+23	42
8 Wingate & Finchley	20	11	7	2	+20	40
9 Tilbury	25	10	5	10	+5	35
10 Redbridge	21	9	6	6	+15	33
11 Cheshunt	20	10	2	8	+5	32
12 Leyton	23	8	5	10	+3	29
13 Great Wakering Rovers	24	8	5	11	-8	29
14 Enfield Town	20	8	4	8	+3	28
15 PotTERS Bar Town (-1)	23	7	6	10	-3	26
16 Malden Town (-3)	21	8	4	9	-6	25
17 Thamesmead Town	24	6	6	12	-16	24
18 Chatham Town	23	6	2	15	-38	20
19 Ilford	22	5	1	16	-35	16
20 Witham Town	3	4	13	24	-32	13
21 Waltham Forest	23	3	3	17	-31	12
22 Hillingdon Borough	24	2	12	1	-48	7

KENT LEAGUE PREMIER DIVISION TABLE

	P	W	D	L	Gd	Pt
1 Hythe Town	17	13	2	2	+24	41
2 Maidstone	17	12	2	3	+24	39
3 Tunbridge Wells	17	11	1	5	+11	34
4 Faversham Town	15	10	1	4	+28	31
5 Herne Bay	18	10	1	7	+5	31
6 Erith & Belvedere	15	8	2	5	+0	26
7 Erith Town	15	7	4	4	+10	25
8 Greenwich Borough	15	8	1	6	+0	25
9 Deal Town	17	6	5	6	+5	23
10 WCD Athletic	13	7	1	5	+15	22
11 Croydon	13	6	1	6	+4	19
12 Sevenoaks Town	16	5	4	7	-5	19
13 Slade Green	16	5	3	8	+5	18
14 Norton Sports	15	5	1	9	-16	16
15 Beckenham Town	18	4	2	12	-8	14
16 Lidswood	16	1	2	13	-24	5
17 Sporting Bengal United	17	0	0	17	-68	0

FIXTURES (Saturday): Coca Cola League 2: Gillingham v Aldershot; Ryman North: Chatham Town v Cheshunt



BRACE: Invicta Dynamos' Anthony Leone (left) scored twice during a thrilling victory over the Chieftains

Dynamos make it eight out of eight in cup thriller

ICE HOCKEY

Chelmsford Chieftains 3

Invicta Dynamos 4

INVICTA Dynamos ensured they completed the English National Ice Hockey League (ENIHL) Cup group with a perfect record thanks to a narrow win at Chelmsford.

The victory was their eighth out of eight games in the South group as they finished six points clear of their nearest rivals Chelmsford and Peterborough.

Wins from their first seven group games meant the Mos had already done enough to top the group and book their place in the semi-finals.

Head coach Kevin Parrish was without Slovakian duo Milan Kostolny and Martin Melichercik, who had returned home for a short break.

The Chieftains came out of the blocks quickly and took an early lead which they held until 35 seconds from the end of the first period, when Jack Tarczycki levelled.

It got even better for the visitors after the break, when Karl Lennon tapped in a rebound from Elliot Andrews' shot.

Netminder Joe White had to be on top form to preserve the lead, making a string of stops en route to a man-of-the-match performance.

Anthony Leone made it 3-1 on 29 minutes after good work from Andy Smith, a lead they held going into the final period thanks to four more superb stops from White.

The Mos penalty box was kept busy in the final 20 minutes, but Leone grabbed his second of the night to seal the win before two late strikes from the Chieftains.

Next up is a league game at home to Cardiff Dragons on Sunday. Face-off at the Gillingham Ice Bowl is at 5.15pm.

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D	600H X 400W	£25.34
O	600H X 600W	£37.13
U	600H X 800W	£50.57
B	600H X 1000W	£62.37
L	600H X 1200W	£75.34
E	600H X 1400W	£87.73
E	600H X 1600W	£99.81

S	600H X 400W	£13.50
I	600H X 600W	£19.83
N	600H X 800W	£26.21
G	600H X 1000W	£32.35
L	600H X 1200W	£38.46
L	600H X 1400W	£44.27
E	600H X 1600W	£50.21

ALLBITS Plumbing Supplies

108-110 Cuxton Road, Strood, Rochester, Kent ME2 2JA

ALL Price Include VAT at 17.5%

